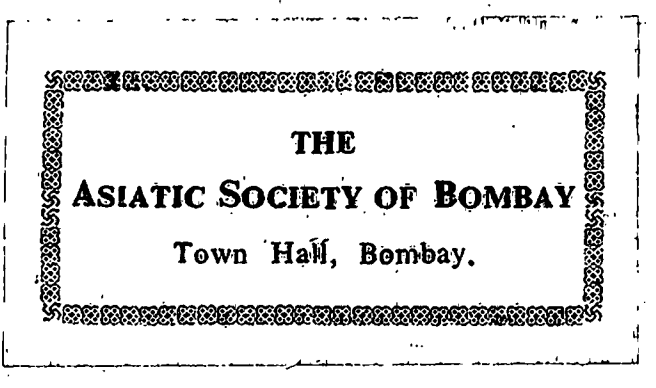

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HISTORICAL CHARACTERS.

VOL. I.

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET
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HISTORICAL CHARACTERS:

TALLEYRAND

COBBETT MACKINTOSH

CANNING

B. 2475

BY

SIR HENRY LYTTON BULWER, G.C.B.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO LORD LYTTON.

My Dear Edward,—

The idea of this work, which I dedicate to you in testimony of the affection and friendship which have always united us, was conceived many years ago. I wished to give some general idea of modern history, from the period of the French Revolution of 1789 down to our own times, in a series of personal sketches. In these sketches I was disposed to select types of particular characters, thinking that in this way it is easier to paint with force and clearness both an individual and an epoch. The outlines of Talleyrand, Cobbett, and others, were then imperfectly traced; and Canning and Mackintosh have been little altered.

The manuscript, however, was laid aside amidst the labours of an active professional career and only thought of since complete leisure created the wish for some employment. It was then that I resumed my task.

I need not say that the portraits I give here are but a few of those I commenced, but the constant change of residence, rendered necessary by the state of health in which I left Constantinople, interfered with the completion of my design and added possibly to the defects which, under any circumstances, would have been found in the following pages.

Sir Robert Peel, whom I intended to place side by side with Mr. Canning, is an omission I regret, but it would have swollen these volumes to too great a size; and is reserved, with two or three more of that great statesman's contemporaries, for a further revisal and a future occasion.

Ever yours affectionately,

H. L. BULWER.

13, RUE ROYALE, PARIS,
Oct. 10, 1867.

ERRATA TO VOL. I.

Page 184, line 10, *for* "conferences" *read* "arrangements."

Page 184, line 11, *for* "Marat" *read* "Maret."

Page 218, line 12, *for* "an American lady, Mrs. Grant" *read* "an East Indian lady, Mrs. Grand."

TALLEYRAND,

THE POLITIC MAN.

PART I.

Different types of men.—M. de Talleyrand, the politic man.—Character of the eighteenth century, which had formed him.—Birth, personal description, entry into church.—Causes of revolution—States-General.—Talleyrand's influence over clergy; over the decision as to the instructions of members, and the drawing up of the rights of man.—Courage in times of danger.—Financial knowledge.—Propositions relative to Church property.—Discredit with the Court party.—Popularity with the Assembly.—Charged to draw up its manifests to the nation.—Project about uniformity of weights and measures.

TALLEYRAND,

THE POLITIC MAN.

PART I.

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE REVOLUTION TO THE EXPOSITION OF THE STATE OF THE NATION.

I.

THERE are many men in all times who employ themselves actively in public affairs; but very few amongst these deserve the title of "Men of action."

The rare individuals who justly claim this designation, and whose existence exercises so important an influence over the age in which they appear, must possess, in no ordinary degree, intelligence, energy, and judgment; but these qualities are found blended in different degrees in the different classes or types of men who, as soldiers, sovereigns, or statesmen, command the destiny of their times.

They in whom superior intelligence, energy,

and judgment are equally united, mount with firm and rapid pace the loftiest steeps of ambition, and establish themselves permanently on the heights to which they have safely ascended. Such men usually pursue some fixed plan or predominant idea with stern caution and indomitable perseverance, adapting their means to their end, but always keeping their end clearly in view, and never, in the pursuit of it, overstepping that line by which difficulties are separated from impossibilities. Cardinal de Richelieu in France, and William III. in England, are types of this heroic race.

On the other hand, they in whom the judgment, however great, is not sufficient to curb the energy and govern the intellect which over-stimulates their nature, blaze out, meteor-like, in history, but rather excite the astonishment and admiration of their own times than leave behind them permanent results. Their exploits far surpass those of other men, and assume for a moment an almost supernatural appearance: but, as their rise is usually sudden and prodigious, their ruin is also frequently abrupt and total. Carried on by a force over which they gradually lose all control, from one act of audacity to another more daring, their genius

sails before the wind, like a vessel with overcrowded canvas, and perishes at last in some violent and sudden squall. Charles XII. of Sweden was an example of this kind in the last century, and Napoleon Bonaparte, if we regard him merely as a conqueror, a more striking one in our own days.

Thirdly, there are men whose energy and whose intelligence is rather subtle and comprehensive, and who are attracted by the useful rather than by the sublime. Shrewd and wary, these men rather take advantage of circumstances than make them. To turn an obstacle, to foresee an event, to seize an opportunity, is their peculiar talent. They are without passions, but self-interest and sagacity combined give them a force like that of passion. The success they obtain is procured by efforts no greater than those of other candidates for public honours and renown, who with an appearance of equal talent vainly struggle after fortune; but all their exertions are made at the most fitting moment, and in the happiest manner.

A nice tact and a far-sighted judgment are the predominant qualities of these "*politic*" persons. They think rarely of what is right in the abstract: they do usually what is best at the moment. They

never play the greatest part amongst their contemporaries: they almost always play a great one; and, without arriving at those extraordinary positions to which a more adventurous race aspires, generally retain considerable importance, even during the most changeful circumstances, and most commonly preserve in retirement or disgrace much of the consideration they acquired in power. During the intriguing and agitated years which preceded the fall of the Stuarts, there was seen in England a remarkable statesman of the character I have just been describing; and a comparison might not inappropriately be drawn between the plausible and trimming Halifax and the adroit and accomplished personage whose name is inscribed on these pages.

But although these two renowned advocates of expediency had many qualities in common—the temper, the wit, the knowledge, the acuteness which distinguished the one equally distinguishing the other—nevertheless the Englishman, although a more dexterous debater in public assemblies, had not in action the calm courage, nor in council the prompt decision, for which the Frenchman was remarkable; neither is his name stamped on the annals of his country in such indelible characters,

nor connected with such great and marvellous events.

And yet, notwithstanding the vastness of the stage on which M. de Talleyrand acted, and the importance of the parts which for more than half a century he played, I venture to doubt whether his character has ever been fairly given, or is at this moment justly appreciated; nor is this altogether surprising. In a life so long, brilliant, and varied, we must expect to find a diversity of impressions succeeding and effacing each other; and not a few who admired the captivating companion, and reverenced the skilful minister of foreign affairs, were ignorant that the celebrated wit and sagacious diplomatist had exhibited an exquisite taste in letters, and a profound knowledge in legislation and finance. Moreover, though it may appear singular, it will be found true, that it is precisely those public men who are the most tolerant to adverse opinions, and the least prone to personal enmities, who oftentimes gather round their own reputation, at least during a time, the darkest obloquy and the most terrible reproaches. The reason for this is simple: such men are themselves neither subject to any predominant affection, nor devoted to any favourite theory. Calm and

impartial, they are lenient and forgiving. On the other hand, men who love things passionately, or venerate things deeply, despise those who forsake—and detest those who oppose—the objects of their adoration or respect. Thus, the royalist, ready to lay down his life for his legitimate sovereign; the republican, bent upon glorious imitations of old Rome and Greece; the soldier, devoted to the chief who had led him from victory to victory, could not but speak with bitterness and indignation of one who commenced the Revolution against Louis XVI., aided in the overthrow of the French Republic, and dictated the proscription of the great captain whose armies had marched for awhile triumphant over Europe.

The most ardent and violent of the men of M. de Talleyrand's time were consequently the most ardent and violent condemners of his conduct; and he, who turns over the various works in which that conduct is spoken of by insignificant critics,* will be tempted to coincide with the remark of the great wit of the eighteenth century: "*C'est un*

* Many of those works confound dates and names, and make the most absurd, as well as the most malignant, accusations; but here and there they relate facts which authentic documents have since confirmed, as well as anecdotes which I have heard contemporaries repeat, and of which I shall therefore take advantage.

terrible avantage de n'avoir rien fait; mais il ne faut pas en abuser."*

How far such writers were justified will be seen more or less in the following pages, which are written with no intention to paint a character deserving of eulogy or inviting to imitation, but simply with the view of illustrating a remarkable class of men by a very remarkable man, who happened to live at a period which will never cease to occupy and interest posterity.

II.

Charles Maurice Talleyrand de Périgord was born February 2, 1754.† The House of Périgord was one of the noblest in France, and in the earliest ages of the French monarchy possessed sovereign power. The principality of Chalais, the only one which existed, I believe, in the time of Louis XIV. (for the other personages called princes at the

* "It is a terrible advantage to have done nothing; but one must not abuse it."

† There seems to be some difficulty in ascertaining the date of M. de Talleyrand's birth with exactitude. I have been told, on apparently the best authority, that he was born on the 7th of March, on the 1st of September, and on the 2nd of February. This last is the date I have selected, having reason upon the whole to believe it the correct one. With respect to the year there is no dispute.

French court, took their titles as princes of the Roman States or the German Empire, and ranked after French dukes), is said to have been eight centuries in this family. Talleyrand, a name usually attached to that of Périgord, and anciently written *Tailleran*, is supposed to have been a sort of *sobriquet*, or nickname, and derived from the words, "*tailler les rangs*" (cut through the ranks). It was borne by Helie V., one of the sovereign counts of Périgord, who lived in 1118; and from this prince (Helie V.) descended two branches of the Talleyrand-Périgords; the one was extinct before the time of Louis XVI., the other, being the younger branch, was then represented by a Comte de Périgord, Captain of the Guards, and Governor of the States of Languedoc. A brother of this Comte de Périgord was the father of Charles Maurice Talleyrand de Périgord (the subject of this memoir), whose mother, Eléonore de Damas, daughter of the Marquis de Damas, was also of a highly noble family, and a lady alike remarkable for her beauty and her virtue.*

* The Countess de Talleyrand lived to 1809; and was very proud of the talents of her son, but regretting, it is said, the use he had made of them.

III.

The seal which marks our destiny has usually been stamped on our childhood; and most men, as they look back to their early youth, can remember the accident, the book, the conversation, which gave that shape to their character which events have subsequently developed.

M. de Talleyrand was in infancy an exile from his home; the fortune of his parents did not correspond with their rank: his father,* a soldier, was always at the court or the camp; his mother held a situation in the household at Versailles. To both a child was an incumbrance, and Maurice immediately at his birth was put out to nurse (as was indeed at that time frequently the custom) in the country, where, either by chance or neglect, he met with a fall which occasioned lameness. This infirmity, when the almost forgotten child at the age of twelve or thirteen was brought up to Paris for the purpose of receiving rather a tardy education, had become incurable; and by a *conseil*

* This gentleman had been *menin* to the Dauphin, son of Louis XV. He subsequently commanded a regiment in the Seven Years' War, and rose to be lieutenant-general in the King's armies. He bore an excellent character, but was never considered to have any ability.

de famille, it was decided that the younger brother, the Comte d'Archambaud—subsequently known as one of the handsomest and most elegant of the courtiers of Louis XVI., and whom I can remember under the title of Duc de Périgord—(a title given by Louis XVIII.), should be considered the elder brother, and dedicated to the profession of arms; whilst the elder son, as the cripple, should be pronounced the younger son, and devoted to the church. From this moment the boy—hitherto lively, idle, and reckless—became taciturn, studious, and calculating. His early propensities remained, for nature admits of no radical change; but they were coloured by disappointment, or combated by ambition. We see traces of gaiety in the companion who, though rarely smiling himself, could always elicit a laugh from others; we see traces of indolence in the statesman who, though always occupied, never did more than the necessity of the case exacted; we see traces of recklessness in the gambler and politician who, after a shrewd glance at the chances, was often disposed to risk his fortune, or his career, on a speculation for money or power: but the mind had been darkened and the heart hardened; and the youth who might easily and carelessly have accepted a prosperous fate,

was ushered into the world with a determination to wrestle with an adverse one.

Nor did any paternal advice or maternal care regulate or soften the dispositions which were thus being formed. From the nurse in the country, M. de Talleyrand was instantly transplanted to the "Collége d'Harcourt," since called that of St. Louis. He entered it more ignorant, perhaps, than any boy of his years; but he soon gained its first prizes, and became one of its most distinguished scholars.

At the "Séminaire de St. Sulpice," to which he was removed in 1770, his talent for disputation attracted attention, and even some of his compositions were long remembered and quoted by contemporaries. Whilst at the Sorbonne, where he subsequently completed his studies, this scion of one of the most illustrious French houses was often pointed out as a remarkably clever, silent, and profligate young man: who made no secret that he disliked the profession that had been chosen for him, but was certain to arrive at its highest honours.

With such prospects and such dispositions, M. de Talleyrand entered, in 1773, the Gallican Church.

IV.

At this time we have to fancy the young ecclesiastic — who had now assumed the name of Périgord — a gentleman about twenty years of age, very smart in his clerical attire, and with a countenance which, without being handsome, was singularly attractive from the triple expression of softness, impudence, and wit. If we are to credit the chronicles of that day, his first advance in his profession was owing to one of those *bon mots* by which so many of the subsequent steps of his varied career were distinguished.

There were assembled at Madame Dubarry's a number of young gentlemen, rather free in their conversation and prodigal in their boasts: no beauty had been veiled to their desires, no virtue had been able to resist their attacks. The subject of this memoir alone said nothing. "And what makes you so sad and silent?" asked the hostess. "*Hélas! madame, je faisais une réflexion bien triste.*" "*Et laquelle?*" "*Ah, madame, que Paris est une ville dans laquelle il est bien plus aisé d'avoir des femmes que des abbayes.*"

The saying, so goes the story, was considered

charming, and being reported to Louis XV., was rewarded by that monarch with the benefice desired. The Abbé de Périgord's career, thus commenced, did not long linger. Within five years after entering the church, aided by his birth and abilities, he obtained (in 1780) the distinguished position of Agent-General of the French clergy—an important personage who administered the ecclesiastical revenues, which were then immense, under the control of regular assemblies.

It is a curious trait in the manners of these times that, whilst holding this high post as a priest, the Abbé de Périgord fitted out a vessel as a privateer; and, it being his intention to spoil the English, received from the French government the cannon he required for so pious a purpose.*

I am unable to say what success attended M. de Talleyrand's naval enterprise; but when, in 1785, he had to give an account of his clerical administration, the very clear and statesmanlike manner in which he did so, raised him, in the

* This singular fact is mentioned by M. Mignet in a short and able memoir, which after M. de Talleyrand's death he read to the French Academy.

opinion of the public, from the position of a clever man, into that of an able one. Nor was this all. The peculiar nature of the first public duties which he thus exercised, directed his mind towards those questions which the increasing deficit in the French exchequer, and the acknowledged necessity of supplying it, made the fashion: for every one at that time in Paris—ladies, philosophers, wits, and men of fashion—talked finance. Few, however, troubled themselves with acquiring any real insight into so dry a subject. But M. de Talleyrand, although constitutionally averse to hard or continued study, supplied this defect by always seeking and living with men who were versed in those affairs with which he wished to become acquainted. In this manner his own information became essentially practical, and the knowledge he obtained of the details of business (furnishing him with a variety of facts, which he always knew how to quote opportunely), attracted the attention and patronage of M. de Calonne, then at the head of the French government, who, being himself as much addicted to pleasure as to affairs, was not sorry to sanction the doctrine that a man of the world might also be a man of business.

But though thus early marked out as a person

who, after the example of his great ecclesiastical predecessors, might rise to the highest dignities in the Church and State, the Abbé de Périgord showed an almost ostentatious disregard for the duties and decorum of the profession which he had been forced to embrace. Indeed, he seemed to make in this sort of conduct a kind of protest against the decree by which his birthright had been reversed, and almost to glory in the publication of profane epigrams and amorous adventures which amused the world but scandalised the church. Thus, each year, which increased his reputation for ability, added to the stories by which public rumour exaggerated his immorality; and in 1788, when the bishopric of Autun, to which he had for some time been looking forward, became vacant, Louis XVI. was unwilling to confer the dignity of prelate on so irregular an ecclesiastic. For four months the appointment was not filled up. But the Abbé de Périgord's father lay at that time on his death-bed: he was visited by the kind-hearted Louis XVI. in this condition, and he begged the monarch, as the last request of a dying and faithful servant, to grant the bishopric in question to his son. The King could not withstand such a prayer at such a time, and

the Abbé de Périgord was consecrated Bishop of Autun on the 17th of January, 1789 — four months before the assembling of the States-General.

V.

The period which had elapsed between the time at which M. de Talleyrand had entered the church, up to that at which he attained the episcopal dignity, is, perhaps, the most interesting in modern civilisation. At no epoch did society ever present so bright and polished a surface as it did in the French capital during these fourteen or fifteen years. The still great fortunes of the *grand seigneur*, the profuse expenditure of the financier, the splendour of a court embellished by that love for the arts and for letters which the Medici had imported from Italy and which Louis XIV. had made a part of his royal magnificence, all contributed to surround life with a taste in luxury which has never been surpassed. Rich manufactures of silk, exquisite chiselling in bronze, china equally beautiful in form and decoration, and paintings somewhat effeminate, but graceful, and which still give celebrity to the names of Watteau, Boucher,

and Greuze, mark the elegant refinement that presided over those days.

Nothing, however, in those courtly times had been carried to such perfection as the art of living, and the habits of social intercourse. People did not then shut up their houses from their friends if they were poor, nor merely open them in order to give gorgeous and pompous entertainments if they were rich. Persons who suited and sympathised, assembled in small circles, which permitted the access of new members cautiously, but received those who had once been admitted without preference or distinction.

In these circles, the courtier, though confident of the fixed superiority of his birth, paid homage to the accident of genius in the man of letters; and the literary man, however proud of his works, or conscious of his talents, rendered the customary tribute of respect to high rank and station.

In this manner, poets and princes, ministers of state, and members of learned academies—men of wit, and men of the world—met on a footing of apparent equality, and real familiarity, on a stage where Beauty, ambitious of universal admiration, cultivated her mind as much as her person, and

established one presiding theory—"that all had to make themselves agreeable."

The evening parties of Madame de Brignole, and of Madame du Deffand, the little suppers of Madame Geoffrin, the dinners of Baron Holbach and Helvetius, the musical receptions of the Abbé Morelet, and the breakfasts of Madame Necker, were only specimens of the sort of assemblies which existed amongst different classes, and thoughout every street and corner of Paris and Versailles.

Here, all orders mingled with suitable deference towards each other. But beneath this brilliant show of actual gaiety and apparent unity, there lay brooding a spirit of dissatisfaction and expectation, which a variety of peculiar circumstances tended, at that time, to exaggerate in France, but which is in fact the usual characteristic of every intellectual community, when neither over-enervated by luxury and peace, nor overwearied by war and civil commotion. Its natural consequence was a desire for change, which diffused its influence over all things—great and small. Léonard revolutionised the head-dress of the French lady: Diderot and Beaumarchais, the principles of the French stage: Turgot and Necker,

the political economy and financial system of the French state: and just at this moment, when the imagination was on the stretch for novelty, as if Providence designed for some mysterious end to encourage the aspiring genius of the epoch, the balloon of Montgolfier took its flight from the Tuileries, and the most romantic dreams were surpassed by a reality.

It was not, however, a mere discontent with the present, a mere hope in the future, a mere passion after things new, however violent that passion might be, which constituted the peril, nor, indeed, the peculiarity of the hour.

In other seasons of this kind, the wishes and views of men have frequently taken some fixed form—have had some fixed tendency—and thus their progress has been regulated, and its result, even from a distance, foreseen.

But at the period to which I am referring, there was no general conception or aim which cast a decisive shadow over coming events, and promised any specific future in exchange for the present, evidently passing away.

There still lived, though on the verge of the tomb, an individual to whom this distinguishing misfortune of the eighteenth century was in no small

degree attributable. The keen sagacity of Voltaire, his piercing raillery, his brilliant and epigrammatic eloquence, had ridiculed and destroyed all faith in old abuses, but had never attempted to give even a clear sketch of what was to come in their room. "*Magis habuit, quod fugeret quam quod sequeretur.*" The effect of his genius, therefore, had been to create around him a sort of luminous mist, produced by the blending of curiosity and doubt; an atmosphere favourable to scepticism, favourable to credulity; and, above all things, generative of enthusiasts and empirics. St. Germain the alchymist, Cagliostro the conjurer, Condorcet the publicist, Marat the politician, were its successive produce. And thus it was,—amidst a general possession of privileges, and a general equality of customs and ideas: amidst a great generosity of sentiment, and an almost entire absence of principle: in a society unequalled in its charms, unbounded in its hopes, and altogether ignorant of its destiny, that the flower of M. de Talleyrand's manhood was passed.

VI.

I have dwelt at some length upon the characteristics—

> "Of those gay times of elegance and ease,
> When Pleasure learnt so gracefully to please:
> When wits and courtiers held the same resorts,
> The courtiers wits, and all wits fit for courts:
> When woman, perfect in her siren art,
> Subdued the mind, and trifled with the heart;
> When Wisdom's lights in fanes fantastic shone,
> And Taste had principles and Virtue none:
> When schools disdained the morals understood,
> And sceptics boasted of some better good:
> When all was Fairyland which met the view,
> No truth untheorized, and no theory true."
>
> * * * * * *

I have dwelt, I say, at some length upon the characteristics of those times; because it is never to be forgotten that the personage I have to speak of was their child. To the latest hour of his existence he fondly cherished their memory; to them he owed many of those graces which his friends still delight to recall: to them, most of those faults which his enemies have so frequently pourtrayed.

The great test of his understanding was that he totally escaped all their grosser delusions. Of this I am able to give a striking proof. It has been said that M. de Talleyrand was raised to the

episcopal dignity in January, 1789, four months previous to the assembling of the States-General. To that great Assembly he was immediately named by the *baillage* of his own diocese; and perhaps there is hardly to be found on record a more remarkable example of human sagacity and right judgment than in the new bishop's address to the body which had chosen him its representative.

In this address, which I have now before me, he separates all the reforms which were practicable and expedient, from all the schemes which were visionary and dangerous—the one and the other being at that time confused and jumbled together in the half-frenzied brains of his countrymen: he omits none of those advantages in government, legislation, finance—for he embraces all these—which fifty years have gradually given to France: he mentions none of those projects of which time, experience, and reason have shown the absurdity and futility.

A charter giving to all equal rights: a great code embodying and simplifying all existing and necessary laws: a provision for prompt justice: the abolition of arbitrary arrest: the mitigation of the laws between debtor and creditor: the establishment of trial by jury: the liberty of the press,

and the inviolability of private correspondence: the destruction of those interior imposts which cut up France into provinces, and of those restrictions by which all but members of guilds were excluded from particular trades: the introduction of order into the finances under a well-regulated system of public accounts: the suppression of all feudal privileges: and the organization of a well-considered general plan of taxation: such were the changes which the Bishop of Autun suggested in the year 1789. He said nothing of the perfectibility of the human race: of a total reorganization of society under a new system of capital and labour: he did not promise an eternal peace, nor preach a general fraternity amongst all races and creeds. The ameliorations he proposed were plain and simple; they affiliated with ideas already received, and could be grafted on the roots of a society already existing. They have stood the test of eighty years—now advanced by fortunate events, now retarded by adverse ones—some of them have been disdained by demagogues, others denounced by despots;—they have passed through the ordeal of successive revolutions; and they furnish at this instant the foundations on which all wise and enlightened Frenchmen desire to establish the condi-

tion of government and society in their great and noble country. Let us do honour to an intelligence that could trace these limits for a rising generation; to a discretion that resisted the temptation to stray beyond them!

VII.

About the time of the assembling of the States-General, there appeared a work which it is now curious to refer to—it was by the pen of Laclos—entitled *Galerie des États-Généraux.* This work gave a sketch under assumed names of the principal personages likely to figure in the States-General. Amongst a variety of portraits, are to be found those of General Lafayette and the Bishop of Autun; the first under the name of Philarète, the second under that of Amène; and, assuredly, the author startles us by his nice perception of the character and by his prophetic sagacity as to the career of these two men. It is well, however, to remember that Laclos was a familiar of the Palais Royal, which the moral soldier shunned and the less scrupulous bishop frequented; and that, whilst he records the defects, he omits the eminent qualities which made the soldier and disciple of Wash-

ington one of the most remarkable men of his time.

"Philarète," says M. Laclos, "having found it easy to become a hero, fancies it will be as easy to become a statesman. The misfortune of Philarète is that he has great pretensions and ordinary conceptions. He has persuaded himself that he was the author of the revolution in America; he is arranging himself so as to become one of the principal actors in a revolution in France.

"He mistakes notoriety for glory, an event for a success, a sword for a monument, a compliment for immortality. He does not like the court, because he is not at his ease in it; nor the world, because there he is confounded with the many; nor women, because they injure the reputation of a man, while they do not add to his position. But he is fond of clubs, because he there picks up the ideas of others; of strangers, because they only examine a foreigner superficially; of mediocrity, because it listens and admires.

"Philarète will be faithful to whatever party he adopts, without being able to assign, even to himself, any good reasons for being so. He has no very accurate ideas of constitutional authority, but the word 'liberty' has a charm for him, because it

rouses an ambition which he scarcely knows what to do with. Such is Philarète. He merits attention, because, after all, he is better than most of his rivals. That the world has been more favourable to him than he deserves, is owing to the fact that he has done a great deal in it, considering the poverty of his ability; and people have been grateful to him, rather on account of what he seemed desirous to be, than on account of what he was. Besides, his exterior is modest, and only a few know that the heart of the man is not mirrored on the surface.

"He will never be much more than we see him, for he has little genius, little nerve, little voice, little art, and is greedy of small successes."

Such was the portrait which was drawn of Lafayette; we now come to that of M. de Talleyrand.

"Amène has charming manners, which embellish virtue. His first title to success is a sound understanding. Judging men with indulgence, events with calmness, he has in all things that moderation which is the characteristic of true philosophy.

"There is a degree of perfection which the intelligence can comprehend rather than realise,

and which there is, undoubtedly, a certain degree of greatness in endeavouring to attain; but such brilliant efforts, though they give momentary fame to those who make them, are never of any real utility. Common sense disdains glitter and noise, and, measuring the bounds of human capacity, has not the wild hope of extending them beyond what experience has proved their just limit.

"Amène has no idea of making a great reputation in a day: such reputations, made too quickly, soon begin to decline, and are followed by envy, disappointment, and sorrow. But Amène will *arrive at everything*, because he will always profit by those occasions which present themselves to such as do not attempt to ravish Fortune. Each step will be marked by the development of some talent, and thus he will at last acquire that general high opinion which summons a statesman to every great post that is vacant. Envy, which will always deny something to a person generally praised, will reply to what we have said, that Amène has not that force and energy of character which is necessary to break through the obstacles that impede the course of a public man. It is true he will *yield to circumstances*, to reason, and

will deem that he can make *sacrifices to peace without descending from principle*; but firmness and constancy may exist without violent ardour, or vapid enthusiasm.

"Amène has against him his pleasing countenance and seductive manner. I know people whom these advantages displease, and who are also prejudiced against a man who happens to unite the useful chance of birth with the essential qualities of the mind.

"But what are we really to expect from Amène in the States-General? Nothing, if he is inspired with the spirit of class; much, if he acts after his own conceptions, and remembers that a national assembly only contains citizens."

VIII.

Few who read the above sketch will deny to the author of the "*Liaisons Dangereuses*," the merit of discernment. Indeed, to describe M. de Talleyrand at this time seems to have been more appropriate to the pen of the novelist than to that of the historian. Let us picture to ourselves a man of about thirty-five, and appearing somewhat older; his countenance of

a long oval; his eyes blue, with an expression at once deep and variable; his lips usually impressed with a smile, which was that of mockery, but not of ill-nature; his nose slightly turned up, but delicate, and remarkable for a constant play in the clearly chiselled nostrils. "He dressed," says one of his many biographers, "like a coxcomb, he thought like a deist, he preached like a saint." At once active and irregular, he found time for everything: the church, the court, the opera. In bed one day from indolence or debauch, up the whole of the following night to prepare a memoir or a speech. Gentle with the humble, haughty with the high; not very exact in paying his debts, but very scrupulous with respect to giving and breaking promises to pay them.

A droll story is related with respect to this last peculiarity. The new Bishop had ordered and received a very handsome carriage, becoming his recent ecclesiastical elevation. He had not, however, settled the coachmaker's "small account." After long waiting and frequent letters, the civil but impatient tradesman determined upon presenting himself every day at the Bishop of Autun's door, at the same time as his equipage.

For several days, M. de Talleyrand saw, without recognising, a well-dressed individual, with his hat in his hand, and bowing very low as he mounted the steps of his coach. "*Et qui êtes vous, mon ami?*" he said at last. "*Je suis votre carrossier, Monseigneur.*" "*Ah! vous êtes mon carrossier; et que voulez-vous, mon carrossier?*" "*Je veux être payé, Monseigneur,*" said the coachmaker, humbly. "*Ah! vous êtes mon carrossier, et vous voulez être payé; vous serez payé, mon carrossier.*" "*Et quand, Monseigneur?*" * "Hum!" murmured the Bishop, looking at his coachmaker very attentively, and at the same time settling himself in his new carriage; "*Vous êtes bien curieux!*" Such was the Talleyrand of 1789, embodying in himself the ability and the frivolity, the ideas and the habits of a large portion of his class. At once the associate of the Abbé Sieyès, and of Mademoiselle Guimard: a profligate fine gentleman, a deep and wary thinker; and, above all things, the delight and ornament of that gay and graceful society, which, crowned with flowers, was about to be the

* "And who are you, my friend?" "I am your coachmaker, my lord." "Ah! you are my coachmaker; and what do you want, my coachmaker?" "I want to be paid, my lord." "Ah! you are my coachmaker, and you want to be paid; you shall be paid, my coachmaker." "And when, my lord?"

first victim to its own philosophy. As yet, however, the sky, though troubled, gave no evidence of storm; and never, perhaps, did a great assembly meet with less gloomy anticipations than that which in the pomp and gallantry of feudal show, swept, on the 1st of May, through the royal city of Versailles.

Still, there was even at that moment visible the sign and symbol of the approaching crisis; for dark behind the waving plumes and violet robes of the great dignitaries of Church and State, moved on the black mass, in sable cloak and garb, of the Commons, or tiers-état, the body which had, *as yet, been nothing*, but which had just been told by one of its most illustrious members,* that it *ought to be everything.*

The history of the mighty revolution which at this moment was commencing, is still so stirring amongst us,—the breath of the tempest which then struck down tower and temple, is still so frequently fancied to be rustling about our own dwellings,—that when the mind even now wanders back, around and about this time, it is always with a certain interest and curiosity, and we pause once again to muse, even though we have often before

* Sieyès, in a celebrated pamphlet published at this period.

meditated, upon that memorable event which opened a new chapter in the history of the world. And the more we reflect, the more does it seem surprising that in so civilised an age, and under so well-meaning a sovereign, an august throne and a great society should have been wholly swept away; nor does it appear less astonishing that a monarch with arbitrary sway, that a magistracy with extraordinary privileges, each wishing to retain their authority, should have voluntarily invoked another power, long slumbering in an almost forgotten constitution, and which, when roused into activity, was so immediately omnipotent over parliament and king.

IX.

The outline of Louis XVI.'s reign is easily, though I do not remember where it is briefly, and clearly traced. At its commencement, the influence of new opinions was confined to the library and drawing-room. The modern notions of constitutional liberty and political economy prevalent amongst men of letters, and fashionable amongst men of the world, had not been professed by men in power, and were consequently disdained by that large class, which

wishes in all countries to pass for the practical portion of the community. At this time, an old minister, himself a courtier, and jealous lest other courtiers should acquire that influence over his master which he possessed, introduced into affairs a set of persons hitherto unknown at court, the most eminent of whom were Turgot, Malesherbes, and Necker; and no sooner had these three eminent reformers obtained a serious political position, than their views acquired a serious political consideration which had not before belonged to them, and the idea that some great and general reform was shortly to take place became deeply seated in the public mind. Each of these ministers would have wished to make the reforms that were most necessary with the aid of the royal authority; and, had they been able to do so, it is probable that they would have preserved the heart and strength of the old monarchy, which was yet only superficially decayed. But the moderate changes which they desired to introduce with the assent of all parties, were opposed by all parties, in spite of—or, perhaps on account of—their very moderation: for losers are rarely satisfied because their losses are small, and winners are never contented but when their gains are great.

In the meantime, Maurepas, who would have

supported the policy of his colleagues, if it had brought him popularity, was by no means disposed to do so when it gave him trouble. Thus, Malesherbes, Turgot, and Necker, were successively forced to resign their offices, without having done anything to establish their own policy, but much to render any other discreditable and difficult.

The publication of the famous "*Comte Rendu*," or balance-sheet of state expenses and receipts, more especially, rendered it impossible to continue to govern as heretofore. And now Maurepas died, and a youthful queen inherited the influence of an old favourite. M. de Calonne, a plausible, clever, but superficial gentleman, was the first minister of any importance, chosen by the influence of Marie-Antoinette's friends. He saw that the expenses and receipts of the government must bear some proportion to each other. He trembled at suddenly reducing old charges; new taxes were the only alternative; and yet it was almost next to impossible to get such taxes from the lower and middle classes, if the clergy and nobility, who conjointly possessed about two-thirds of the soil, were exempted from all contributions to the public wants. The minister, nevertheless, shrunk from despoiling the privileged classes of their immunities, without some autho-

rization from themselves. He called together, therefore, the considerable personages, or "notables," as they were styled, of the realm, and solicited their sanction to new measures and new imposts, some of the former of which would limit their authority, and some of the latter affect their purses.

The "notables" were divided into two factions: the one of which was opposed to M. de Calonne, the other wanted the changes which he wished to introduce. These two parties united and became irresistible. Amongst their ranks was a personage of great ambition and small capacity—Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse. This man was the most violent of M. de Calonne's opponents. The court turned round suddenly and chose him as M. de Calonne's successor. This measure, at first, was successful, for conflicting opinions end by creating personal antipathies, and the "notables," in a moment of exultation over the defeated minister, granted everything with facility to the minister who had supplanted him. A new embarrassment, however, now arose. The notables were, after all, only an advising body: they could say what they deemed right to be done, but they could not do it. This was the business of the sovereign; but his edicts, in order to acquire regu-

larly the force of law, had to be registered by the Parliament of Paris; and it is easy to understand how such a power of registration became, under particular circumstances, the power of refusal. The influence of that great magisterial corporation, called the "Parliament of Paris," had, indeed, acquired, since it had been found necessary to set aside Louis XIV.'s will by the sanction of its authority, a more clear and positive character than at former periods. This judicial court, or legislative assembly, had thus become a constituent part of the State, and had also become—as all political assemblies, however composed, which have not others for their rivals, will become—the representative of popular opinion. It had seen, with a certain degree of jealousy, the convocation, however temporarily, of another chamber (for such the assembly of notables might be called), and was, moreover, as belonging to the aristocracy, not very well disposed to the surrender of its aristocratic privileges. It refused, therefore, to register the new taxes proposed to it: thus thwarting the consent of the notables, avoiding, for a time, the imposts with which its own class was threatened, and acquiring, nevertheless, some increase of popularity with the people who are

usually disposed to resist all taxation, and were pleased with the invectives against the extravagance of the court, with which the resistance of the parliament was accompanied.

The government cajoled and threatened the parliament, recalled it, again quarrelled with it, attempted to suppress it—and failed.

Disturbances broke out, famine appeared at hand, a bankruptcy was imminent; there was no constituted authority with sufficient power or sufficient confidence in itself to act decisively. People looked out for some new authority: they found it in an antique form. "The States-General!" (that is, an assembly chosen from the different classes, which, in critical periods of the French nation had been heretofore summoned) became the unanimous cry. The court, which wanted money and could not get it, expected to find more sympathy in a body drawn from all the orders of the State than from a special and privileged body which represented but one order.

The parliament, on the other hand, imagined that, having acquired the reputation of defending the nation's rights, it would have its powers maintained and extended by any collection of men representing the nation. This is why both parliament and court came by common accord to one conclusion.

The great bulk of the nobility, though divided in their previous discussions, here, also, at last agreed: one portion because it participated in the views of the court, and the other because it participated in those of the parliament.

In the meantime, the unfortunate Archbishop, who had tried every plan for filling the coffers of the court without the aid of the great council now called together, was dismissed as soon as that council was definitively summoned; and, according to the almost invariable policy of restoring to power the statesman who has increased his popularity by losing office, M. Necker was again placed at the head of the finances and presented to the public as the most influential organ of the crown.

X.

It will be apparent, from what I have said, that the court expected to find in the States-General an ally against the parliament, whilst the parliament expected to find in the States-General an ally against the court. Both were deceived.

The nobility, or notables, the government, and the parliament, had all hitherto been impotent,

because they had all felt that there was another power around them and about them, by which their actions were controlled, but with which, as it had no visible representation, they had no means of dealing.

That power was "public opinion." In the Commons of France, in the Deputies from the most numerous, thoughtful, and stirring classes of the community, a spirit—hitherto impalpable and invisible—found at once a corporate existence.

Monsieur d'Espremenil, and those parliamentary patricians who a year before were in almost open rebellion against the sovereign, at last saw that they had a more potent enemy to cope with, and rallied suddenly round the throne. Its royal possessor stood at that moment in a position which no doubt was perilous, but which, nevertheless, I believe, a moderate degree of sagacity and firmness might have made secure. The majority of the aristocracy of all grades, from a feudal sentiment of honour, was with the King. The middle classes also had still for the monarch and his rank considerable respect; and were desirous to find out and sanction some just and reasonable compromise between the institutions that were disappearing, and the ideas that had come into vogue. It was

necessary to calm the apprehensions of those who had anything to lose, to fix the views of those who thought they had something to gain, and to come at once to a settlement with the various classes—here agitated by fear, there by expectation. But however evident the necessity of this policy, it was not adopted. Suspicions that should have been dissipated were excited; notions that should have been rendered definite were further disturbed; all efforts at arrangement were postponed; and, thus the revolution rushed onwards, its tide swelling, and its rapidity being increased by the blunders of those who had the greatest interest and desire to arrest it. The fortune of M. de Talleyrand was embarked upon that great stream, of which few could trace the source, and none foresaw the direction.

XI.

I have just said that none foresaw the direction in which the great events now commencing were likely to run. That direction was mainly to be influenced by the conduct and character of the sovereign, but it was also, in some degree, to be affected by the conduct and character of the states-

man to whom the destinies of France were for the moment confided.

M. Necker belonged to a class of men not uncommon in our own time. His abilities, though good, were not of the first order; his mind had been directed to one particular branch of business; and, as is common with persons who have no great genius and one specialty, he took the whole of government to be that part which he best understood. Accordingly, what he now looked to, and that exclusively, was balancing the receipts and expenditure of the State. To do this, it was necessary to tax the nobility and clergy; and the class through whose aid he could best hope to achieve such a task was the middle-class, or "tiers-état." For this reason, when it had been decided to convoke the States-General, and it became necessary to fix the proportionate numbers by which each of the three orders (viz. the nobility, clergy, middle-class, or "tiers-état,") which composed the States-General, was to be represented, M. Necker determined that the sole order of the "tiers-état" should have as many representatives as the two other orders conjointly; thinking in this way to give the middle-class a greater authority, and to counterbalance the want of rank in its indi-

vidual members, by their aggregate superiority in numbers.

But when M. Necker went thus far, he should have gone farther, and defined in what manner the three orders should vote, and what power they should separately exercise. This precaution, however, he did not take; and therefore, as soon as the States-General assembled, there instantly arose the question as to whether the three orders were to prove the validity of their elections together as members of one assembly, or separately as members of three distinct assemblies. This question, in point of fact, determined whether the three orders were to sit and vote together, or whether each order was to sit and vote apart; and after M. Necker's first regulation it was clear that, in one case, the order of the Commons would predominate over all opposition; and that, in the other, it would be subordinate to the two rival orders. A struggle then naturally commenced.

XII.

The members of the "tiers-état," who, as the largest of the three bodies forming the States-General, had been left in possession of the

chamber where all the orders had been first collected to meet the sovereign—an accident much in their favour—invited the members of the two other orders to join them there. The clergy hesitated; the nobles refused. Days and weeks passed away, and the minister, seeing his original error, would willingly have remedied it by now proposing that which he might originally have fixed, namely, that the three orders should vote together on questions of finance, and separately on all other questions. This idea was brought forward late; but, even thus late, it might have prevailed if the court had been earnest in its favour. The King, however, and those who immediately influenced him, had begun to think that a deficit was less troublesome than the means adopted to get rid of it; and fancying that the States-General, if left to themselves, might ere long dissolve amidst the dissensions which were discrediting them, were desirous that these dissensions should continue. Nor would this policy have failed in its object if negotiation had been much further prolonged.

But it is at great moments like these that a great man suddenly steps forth, and whilst the crowd is discussing what is best to be done, does it. Such a man was the Comte de Mirabeau; and on

the 15th of June, this marvellous personage, whose audacity was often prudence, having instigated the Abbé Sieyès (whose authority was at that time great with the Assembly) to bring the subject under discussion, called on the tiers-état, still doubting and deliberating, to constitute themselves at once, and without further waiting for the nobility, "The Representatives of the French people." They did so in reality, though not in words, declaring themselves duly elected, and taking as their title "The National Assembly." The government thought to stop their proceedings by simply shutting up the chamber where they had hitherto met, but so paltry a device was insufficient to arrest the resolutions of men whose minds were now prepared for important events. Encouraging each other, the Commons rushed unhesitatingly to a tennis-court, and in that spot, singularly destined to witness so solemn a ceremony, swore, with but one dissentient voice, to stand by each other till France had a constitution. After such an oath, the alternative was clearly between the old monarchy, with all its abuses, and a new constitution, whatever its dangers. On this ground, two orders in the State stood hostilely confronted. But another order remained, whose conduct at such a

juncture was all-decisive. That order was the clergy,—which, still respected if not venerated,—wealthy, connected by various links with each portion of society, and especially looked up to by that great and sluggish mass of quiet men who always stand long wavering between extremes—had been endeavouring to effect some compromise between the privileged classes and their opponents, but had as yet taken no prominent part with either. The moment was come at which it could no longer hesitate.

XIII.

M. de Talleyrand, though but a new dignitary in the church, was already one of its most influential members. He had been excluded by a prejudice of the nobility from the situation to which his birth had entitled him amongst them. He had long resolved to obtain another position at least as elevated through his own exertions. His views, as we have seen, at the time of his election, were liberal, though moderate, whilst he was sufficiently acquainted with the character of Louis XVI. to know that that monarch would never sincerely yield, nor ever sturdily resist, any concession demanded with persistency. Partly, therefore, from

a conviction that he was doing what was best for the public, and partly, also, from the persuasion that he was doing what was best for himself, he separated boldly from the rest of his family (who were amongst the most devoted to the Comte d'Artois and Marie-Antoinette), and laboured with unwearied energy to enlist the body he belonged to on the popular side.

To succeed in this object, he had the talents and advantages most essential. His natural courtesy flattered the curates; his various acquirements captivated his more learned brethren; his high birth gave him the ear of the great ecclesiastical dignitaries; and, finally, a majority of his order, instigated by his exertions and address, joined the Third Estate, on the 22nd of June, in the Church of Saint-Louis.

From that moment the question hitherto doubtful was determined; for at no time have the clergy and the commons stood side by side without being victorious. It was in vain, therefore, that even so early as the day following, the descendant of Louis XIV., in all the pomp of royalty, and in the presence of the three orders—whom he had for that day summoned to assemble—denounced the conduct which the tiers-état had

pursued, annulled their decisions, and threatened them with his sovereign displeasure.

The tiers-état resisted; the King repented—retracted,—and showing that he had no will, lost all authority. Thus, on the 27th of June, the States-General, henceforth designated by the title which had been already assumed by the Commons (the National Assembly), held their deliberations together, and the three orders were confounded.

XIV.

But one step now remained in order to legalise the revolution in progress. Each deputy had received a sort of mandate or instruction from those who named him at the moment of his election. Such instructions or mandates, which had been given at a time when people could hardly anticipate the state of things which had since arisen, limited, or seemed to limit, the action of a deputy to particular points which had especially attracted the attention of his constituents.

The conservative party contended that these mandates were imperative, the liberal party that they were not. According to the first supposition, the States-General could do no more than redress a-

few grievances; according to the other, they could create a perfectly new system of government.

The Bishop of Autun, in the first speech he delivered in the National Assembly—a speech which produced considerable effect—argued in favour of his own liberty and that of his colleagues, and his views were naturally enough adopted by a body which, feeling its own force, had to determine its own power. Hence, on the record of two great decisions—the one solving the States-General into the "National Assembly;" the other extending and fixing that assembly's authority—decisions which, whatever their other results, were at least fatal to the power and influence of the class to which he belonged by birth, but from which he had, in spite of himself, been severed in childhood—was indelibly inscribed the name of the once despised and still disinherited cripple of the princely house of Périgord.

XV.

There was nothing henceforth to impede the labours of the National Assembly, and it commenced those labours with earnestness and zeal, if not with discretion. One of its first acts was to choose by ballot a committee of eight members,

charged to draw up the project of a constitution, which was subsequently to be submitted to the Assembly. The Bishop of Autun was immediately placed upon this select and important committee. It had for its task to render practical the political speculations of the eighteenth century. Things, however, had commenced too violently for them to proceed thus peaceably; and as the success of the popular party had been hitherto obtained by braving the crown, it was to be expected that the crown would seize the first opportunity that presented itself for boldly recovering its authority. A well-timed effort of this kind might have been successful. But neither Louis XVI., nor any of the counsellors in whom he confided, possessed that instinct in political affairs which is the soul of action, inspiring men with the resolve to do the right thing at the right moment. It has often been found easy to crush a revolution at its commencement, for the most ardent of its supporters at such a time act feebly, and doubt about the policy they are pursuing. It has often been found possible to arrest a revolution at that subsequent stage of its progress when the moderate are shocked by some excess, or the sanguine checked by some disappointment; but a revolution is invincible at that crisis, when its

progress, begun with boldness, has neither been checked by misfortune, nor disgraced by violence.

Nevertheless, it was just at such a crisis that the unfortunate Louis XVI., guided in a great degree by the fatal influence of his brother, after having gradually surrounded Versailles and the capital with troops, suddenly banished M. Necker (July 10th), whose disgrace was instantly considered the defeat of those who advised the King to renovate his authority by concessions, and the triumph of those who counselled him to recover and re-establish it by force. But the measures which were to follow this act were still in suspense, when a formidable insurrection broke out at Paris. A portion of the soldiery sided with the people. The Bastille was taken, and its commandant put to death, the populace got possession of arms, the prevost or mayor of the city was assassinated, whilst the army which had been so ostentatiously collected in the Champ de Mars and at St. Denis was left an inactive witness of the insurrection which its array had provoked. The results were those which usually follow the strong acts of weak men: Louis XVI. submitted; M. Necker was recalled; the Comte d'Artois emigrated.

It was M. de Talleyrand's fortune not merely at

all times to quit a falling party at the commencement of its decline, but to stand firm by a rising party at the moment of its struggle for success. This was seen during the contest we have just been describing. Throughout that contest the Bishop of Autun was amongst the most determined for maintaining the rights of the nation against the designs of the court. His decision and courage added not a little to the reputation which had been already gained by his ability. We find his name, therefore, first in the list of a small number of eminent men,* whom the Assembly, when surrounded by hostile preparations for restoring the despotism which had been abolished, charged, in a bold but not imprudent spirit of defiance, with the task of at once completing and establishing the constitution which had been promised, and which it had become evident there was no intention to accord. The labour of these statesmen, however, was not easy, even after their cause was triumphant, for political victories often leave the conquerors—in the excess of their own passions, and the exaggeration of their own principles—worse enemies than those whom they have vanquished. Such was the case now.

* Evêque d'Autun, archévêque de Bordeaux, Lally, Clermont-Tonnerre, Mounier, Sieyès, &c., &c.

XVI.

In the exultation of the moment all moderate notions were laid aside, and succeeded by a blind excitement in favour of the most sweeping changes. Nor was this excitement the mere desire of vulgar and selfish interest stirring the minds of those who hoped to better their own condition: nobler and loftier emotions lit up the breasts of men who had only sacrifices to make, with a generous enthusiasm. "Nos âmes," says the elder Ségur, "étaient alors enivrées d'une douce philanthropie, qui nous portait à chercher avec passion les moyens d'être utiles à l'humanité, et de rendre le sort des hommes plus heureux."* On the 4th of August, "a day memorable with one party," observes M. Mignet, "as the St. Bartholomew of property, and with the other as the St. Bartholomew of abuses,"—personal service, feudal obligations, pecuniary immunities, trade corporations, seignorial privileges, and courts of law, —all municipal and provincial rights,—the whole system of judicature,—based on the purchase and

* "Our souls were then intoxicated by a gentle philanthropy, which induced us to seek passionately the means of being useful to humanity, and of rendering the condition of man more happy."

sale of judicial charges, and which, singular to state, had, however absurd in theory, hitherto produced in practice learned, able, and independent magistrates,—in short, almost all the institutions and peculiarities which constituted the framework of government and society throughout France, were unhesitatingly swept away, at the instigation and demand of the first magistrates and nobles of the land, who did not sufficiently consider that they who destroy at once all existing laws (whatever those laws may be), destroy at the same time all established habits of thought;—that is, all customs of obedience, all spontaneous feelings of respect and affection, without which a form of government is merely an idea on paper.

In after times, M. de Talleyrand, when speaking of this period, said, in one of his characteristic phrases, "*La Révolution a désossé la France.*" But it is easier to be a witty critic of by-gone history, than a cool and impartial actor in passing events; and at the time to which I am alluding the Bishop of Autun was, undoubtedly, amongst the foremost in destroying the traditions which constitute a community, and proclaiming the theories which captivate a mob. The wholesale abolition of institutions, which must have had something

worth preserving or they would never have produced a great and polished society honourably anxious to reform its own defects, was sanctioned by his vote; and the "rights of man," the acknowledgment of which did so little to secure the property or life of the citizen, were proclaimed in the words that he suggested.

It is difficult to conceive how so cool and sagacious a statesman could have imagined that an old society was to be well governed by entirely new laws, or that practical liberty could be founded on a declaration of abstract principles. A sane mind, however, does not always escape an epidemic folly; any more than a sound body escapes an epidemic disease. Moreover, in times when, to censure unnecessary changes, is to pass for being the patron, and often in reality to be the supporter, of inveterate abuses, no one carries out, or can hope to carry out, precisely his own ideas. Men act in masses: the onward pressure of one party is regulated by the opposing resistance of another: to pursue a policy, it may be expedient for those who do not feel, to feign, a passion; and a wise man may excuse his participation in an absurd enthusiasm by observing it was the only means to vanquish still more absurd prejudices.

Still, if M. de Talleyrand was at this moment an exaggerated reformer, he at least did not exhibit one frequent characteristic of exaggerated reformers, by being so wholly occupied in establishing some delusive scheme of future perfection, as to despise the present absolute necessities. He saw from the first that, if the new organization of the State was really to be effected, it could only be so by re-establishing confidence in its resources, and that a national bankruptcy would be a social dissolution. When, therefore, M. Necker (on the 25th of August) presented to the Assembly a memoir on the situation of the finances, asking for a loan of eighty millions of francs, the Bishop of Autun supported this loan without hesitation; demonstrating the importance of sustaining the public credit; and shortly afterwards (in September), when the loan thus granted was found insufficient to satisfy the obligations of the State, he again aided the minister in obtaining from the Assembly a tax of twenty-five per centum on the income of every individual throughout France. A greater national sacrifice has rarely been made in a moment of national distress, and has never been made for a more honourable object. It is impossible, indeed, not to feel an interest in the exertions of men animated,

amidst all their errors, by so noble a spirit, and not to regret that with aspirations so elevated, and abilities so distinguished, they should have failed so deplorably in their efforts to unite liberty with order—vigour with moderation.

But Providence seems to have prescribed as an almost universal rule that everything which is to have a long duration must be of slow growth. Nor is this all: we must expect that, in times of revolution, contending parties will constantly be hurried into collisions contrary to their reason, and fatal to their interests, but inevitably suggested by their anger or suspicions. Hence the wisest intentions are at the mercy of the most foolish incidents. Such an incident now occurred.

A military festival at Versailles, which the royal family imprudently attended, and in which it perhaps idly delighted to excite a profitless enthusiasm amongst its guards and adherents, alarmed the multitude at Paris, already irritated by an increasing scarcity of food, and dreading an appeal to the army on the part of the sovereign, as the sovereign dreaded an appeal to the people on the part of the popular leaders. The men of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, and the women of the market-place, either impelled by their own pressing wants and

indefinite fears, or guided (as it was then—I believe falsely—reported) by the secret influence of the Duc d'Orléans, were soon seen pouring from the dark corners of the capital, and covering the broad and stately road which leads to the long-venerated palace, where, since the time of the "Great Monarch," his descendants had held their court. In the midst of an accidental tumult, this lawless rabble entered the royal residence, massacreing its defenders.

The King was rescued from actual violence, though not from insult, and escorted with a sort of decorum to the Tuileries, which he henceforth inhabited, nominally as the supreme magistrate of the State, but in reality as a prisoner. The National Assembly followed him to Paris.

XVII.

The events of which I have been speaking took place on the 5th and 6th of October; and were, to the advocates of constitutional monarchy, what the previous insurrection, in July, had been to the advocates of absolute power. Moderate men began to fear that it was no longer possible to ally the dignity and independence of the crown with

the rights and liberties of the people: and MM. Mounier and Lally-Tollendal, considered the leaders of that party which from the first had declared the desire to establish in France a mixed constitutional government, similar to that which prevailed in England—disheartened and disgusted—quitted the Assembly. Hitherto, M. de Talleyrand had appeared disposed to act with these statesmen, but he did not now imitate their conduct: on the contrary, it was precisely at the moment when they separated themselves from the Revolution, that he brought forward a motion which connected him irrevocably with it.

Had affairs worn a different aspect, it is probable that he would not have compromised himself so decidedly in favour of a scheme which was certain to encounter a determined and violent opposition: still it is but just to observe that his conduct in this instance was in perfect conformity with the course he had previously pursued, and the sentiments he had previously expressed, both with respect to the exigencies of the State and the property of the Church. I have shown, indeed, the interest he had manifested in maintaining the public credit, first by supporting a loan of eighty millions of francs, and secondly by voting a pro-

perty tax of twenty-five per cent. But the one had proved merely a temporary relief, and the other had not given an adequate return ; for, as the whole administration of the country had been disorganised, so the collection of taxes was precarious and difficult. Some new resource had to be sought for. There was but one left. The clergy had already resigned their tithes, which at first had only been declared purchasable, and had also given up their plate. When M. de Juisné, Archbishop of Paris, made the two first donations in the name of his brethren, he had been seconded by the Bishop of Autun; and it was the Bishop of Autun who now proposed (on the 10th of October) that all that remained to the clergy—their land—should, on certain conditions, be placed at the disposal of the nation.

XVIII.

M. Pozzo di Borgo, a man in nowise inferior to M. de Talleyrand, though somewhat jealous of him, once said to me, "Cet homme s'est fait grand en se rangeant toujours parmi les petits, et en aidant ceux qui avaient le plus besoin de lui."*

* "This man has made himself great by placing himself always by the side of the little, and aiding those who most needed him."

The propensity which M. Pozzo di Borgo somewhat bitterly but not inaccurately described, and which perhaps was in a certain degree the consequence of that nice perception of his own interests which guided the person whom I designate as "politic" through life almost like an instinct, was especially visible in the present instance. No one can doubt that, at the moment when every other institution was overturned in France, a great change in the condition of the French church, against which the spirit of the eighteenth century had been particularly directed, was an event not to be avoided. Alone amidst the general prodigality, this corporation by its peculiar condition had been able to preserve all its wealth, whilst it had lost almost all its power.

The feeble and the rich in times of commotion are the natural prey of the strong and the needy; and, therefore, directly the nation commenced a revolution to avoid a bankruptcy, the ecclesiastical property was pretty sure, a little sooner or a little later, to be appropriated to the public exigencies. Such an appropriation nevertheless was not without difficulties; and what the laity most wanted was a churchman of position and consideration who would sanction a plan for surrendering the

property of the church. The opinions expressed by a man of so high a rank in the nobility and the clergy as the Bishop of Autun, were therefore of considerable importance, and likely to give him—those opinions being popular—an important position, which was almost certain (M. Necker's influence being already undermined) to lead—should a new ministry be formed on the liberal side—to office. Mirabeau, in fact, in a note written in October, which proposes a new ministerial combination, leaves M. Necker as the nominal head of the government "in order to discredit him," proposes himself as a member of the royal council without a department, and gives the post of minister of finance to the Bishop of Autun, saying, "His motion on the clergy has won him that place."*

The argument with which the Bishop introduced the motion here alluded to, has been so often repeated since the period to which I am referring, and has so influenced the condition of the clergy throughout a great portion of Europe, that it cannot be read without interest. "The State," said M. de Talleyrand, "has been for a long time struggling with the most urgent wants. This is known to

* "La motion du clergé lui a conquis cette place."—*Correspondance de Mirabeau et le Comte de la Marck.*

all of us. Some adequate means must be found to supply those wants. All ordinary sources are exhausted. The people are ground down. The slightest additional impost would be justly insupportable to them. Such a thing is not to be thought of. Extraordinary means for supplying the necessities of the State have been resorted to; but these were destined to the extraordinary wants of this year. Extraordinary resources of some kind are now wanted for the future; without them, order cannot be established. There is one such resource, immense and decisive: and which, in my opinion (or otherwise I should reject it), can be made compatible with the strictest respect for property. I mean the landed estate of the church.

* * * * *

"Already a great operation with regard to this estate is inevitable, in order to provide suitably for those whom the relinquishment of tithes has left destitute.

* * * * * *

"I think it unnecessary to discuss at length the question of church property. What appears to me certain is, that the clergy is not a proprietor like other proprietors, inasmuch as that the property which it enjoys (and of which it cannot dis-

pose) was given to it—not for its own benefit, but for the performance of duties which are to benefit the community. What appears to me also certain is, that the nation, exercising an almost unlimited power over all the bodies within its bosom, possesses—not the right to destroy the whole body of the clergy, because that body is required for the service of religion—but the right to destroy any particular aggregations of such body whenever they are either prejudicial or simply useless; and if the State possesses this right over the existence of prejudicial or useless aggregations of the clergy, it evidently possesses a similar right over the property of such aggregations.

"It appears to me also clear that as the nation is bound to see that the purpose for which foundations or endowments were made is fulfilled, and that those who endowed the church meant that the clergy should perform certain functions: so, if there be any benefices where such functions are not performed, the nation has a right to suppress those benefices, and to grant the funds, therefrom derived, to any members of the clergy who can employ them according to the object with which they were given.

* * * * *

"But although it is just to destroy aggregations of the clergy which are either prejudicial or useless, and to confiscate their property—although it is just to suppress benefices which are no longer useful for the object for which such benefices were endowed—is it just to confiscate or reduce the revenue of those dignitaries and members of the church, who are now actually living and performing the services which belong to their sacred calling?

* * * * *

"For my own part, I confess the arguments employed to support the contrary opinion appear to me to admit of several answers. I shall submit one very simple answer to the Assembly.

"However, the possession of a property may be guaranteed and made inviolable by law, it is evident that the law cannot change the nature of such property in guaranteeing it.

"Thus, in a question of ecclesiastical property, it can only assure to each titulary the enjoyment of the actual donation of the founder. But every one is aware that, according to the titles of church property, as well as according to the various laws of the church, which explain the spirit and meaning of these titles, the only part of church property to

which the ecclesiastic has any individual right is that necessary for his honest subsistence: the remainder has to be applied to the relief of the poor, or to the maintenance of places of worship. If then the nation assures to the holder of a benefice, whatever that benefice may be, his necessary subsistence, it does not violate his individual property; and if at the same time that it takes possession of that portion of his revenue which is not required for his subsistence, it assumes the other obligations attached to the benefice in question, such as the maintenance of hospitals, the performance of works of charity, the repairing of churches, the expenses of public education, &c.; and, above all, if it does this in a moment of general distress, I cannot but believe that the intentions of the donors will be fully carried out, and that justice will still be maintained.

"I think, then, that the nation in a period of general distress may appropriate the property of those religious establishments which it deems it necessary to suppress, by securing to their dependants their necessary subsistence; that it may also profit by all benefices to which no duties are attached, and assure to itself the reversion of all such benefices as may hereafter fall into that con-

dition; and lastly, that it may reduce all extravagant salaries now enjoyed by the clergy if it take to itself all the obligations—apart from the decent maintenance of the clergy—which originally attached to church property according to the founder's bequest. Such are the principles according to which the State may, in my opinion, legitimately appropriate the whole of the ecclesiastical property, on assuring to the clergy therefrom what would be sufficient for their decent support."

* * * * *

XIX.

Thus M. de Talleyrand contended:—

1st. That the members of the clergy were not like other proprietors, inasmuch as they held their property not for their own enjoyment but for the performance of certain duties, and that it was only intended that they should have out of the proceeds of that property a decent subsistence, the residue being destined for the support of the poor and the maintenance of religious edifices.

2nd. That the State could alter the distribution of church property, or rather the payment of the clergy, and also totally suppress such ecclesiastical

institutions as it deemed injurious or not requisite; as well as such useless benefices as were then vacant, or might become vacant; and, as a matter of course, employ the revenue which was thereto attached, in the manner which might seem best adapted to the general advantage.

3rd. That in a moment of great and national distress it might altogether take possession of the whole property held by the clergy, and appropriate the same to public purposes; if at the same time it took upon itself those charges with which the clergy were intrusted, and also provided for the clergy themselves a fixed and adequate support. He did not, however, propose, as some may have idly imagined, and have unjustly stated, to reduce his order to a state of indigence; on the contrary, presuming the revenue of the church property, including the tithes (which he would still have had collected as national revenue), to be about a hundred and fifty millions of francs, he advised the government to make a yearly grant of no less than a hundred millions—never to be reduced below eighty-five millions—for the support of the clergy, no member of it receiving less than twelve hundred francs, to which was added a dwelling; and when we consider that the tithes having

been surrendered, the ecclesiastical revenue was at that time reduced to seventy-five millions, the rent of the land; and when we consider also that the ecclesiastical budget, including the payment of all religions, has never, since that period, amounted to the sum which M. de Talleyrand was disposed to allow, I think it must be acknowledged that the proposals I have been describing, looking at all the difficulties of the times, were not to be despised, and that the French clergy would have acted more prudently if they had at once accepted them, although it must be confessed that any bargain made in changeful times between a power which is sinking in the State and a power which is rising, is rarely kept faithfully by the latter.

But the clergy, at all events, and the high clergy especially, would not accept this bargain. They complained not so much of the insufficiency of the provision which was to be made for them, as of the grievance of having an income as proprietors changed into a salary as functionaries. They contended, in short, that they were proprietors like other proprietors, and that the Bishop of Autun had misstated their case and justified their robbery.

In this state of things—whatever the real nature of the title under which the church held

its possessions—whatever the imprudence of the clergy themselves in resisting the compromise that was proposed to them as an equivalent for the surrender of those possessions—it was impossible forcibly to confiscate a property which a great corporation had held indisputedly for ages and which it declared itself unwilling to resign, without weakening the respect for property in general, and weakening also, by the questions and discussions to which such a measure was certain to give rise, the respect for religion: thus enfeebling and undermining—at a moment when (amidst the falling ruins of an old government and society) it was most essential to strengthen and preserve—those foundations on which every society that pretends to be civilized, and every government that intends to be honest, has to establish its existence.

"The wise," says a great reformer, "should be cautious about making great changes when the foolish are clamorous for dangerous innovations." But although the maxim may be a good one, I suspect that it is more likely to be professed by the speculative philosopher than followed by the ambitious statesman.

There are, in fact, moments in the history of nations when certain events are, by the multiplied

force of converging circumstances, inevitably foredoomed; and in such moments, whilst the ignorant man is obstinate, the proud man firm, the religious man resigned, the "*politic* man" accommodates himself to fate, and only attempts to mix up as much good as he can with the evil which has to be accepted.

It is easy to conceive, therefore, that when M. de Talleyrand proposed the appropriation of the church property by the State, he did so because he saw that at all events it would be appropriated; because he thought that he might as well obtain the popularity which was to be got by the proposition; and likewise because he could thus bargain for such conditions as, if they had been frankly accepted by one party and fairly carried out by the other, would have secured an honourable existence to the clergy and an immense relief to the State. I say an immense relief to the State, since, according to the calculations which the Bishop of Autun submitted to the Assembly—and these seem to have been made with consideration—had the immense property, valued at two milliards of francs, been properly sold, and the proceeds properly applied, these, by paying off money borrowed at enormous interest and life annuities which were granted at

an extravagant loss, might with tolerable economy have converted a deficit of some millions of francs into a surplus of about the same amount.

But it happened at this time, as it not unfrequently happens when passion and prudence unite in some great enterprise, the part which passion counselled was consummated completely and at once; the part which prudence suggested was transformed and spoilt in the execution. To this subject I shall by-and-by have to return.

XX.

The motion of M. de Talleyrand with respect to the property of the church was carried on the 2nd of November, 1789, after some stormy debates; and the party he had defeated now classed him amongst its bitterest opponents. But, on the 4th of December, he gained more than a party triumph by the singular lucidity with which, on the question of establishing a bank at Paris and restoring order generally to the French finances, he explained the principles of banking and public credit, which the public at that time enveloped in the mystery with which ignorance almost naturally surrounds those subjects which are detailed in figures, and involve

such vast interests as the resources and necessities of a nation.

The admirable talent which M. de Talleyrand displayed on this occasion consisted in rendering clear what appeared obscure, and simple what seemed abstract. After showing that a bank could only exist with benefit to itself and to others by its credit—and that this credit could not be the effect of a paper money with a forced currency, on which some persons were disposed to form one, inasmuch as that a currency which was forced was nothing more or less than an exhibition of the insolvency of the institution which it was intended to protect—he turned to the general condition and credit of the State, and said: "The time, gentlemen, is gone by for complicated fiscal plans, learnedly and artfully combined, which are merely invented to delay by temporary resources the crisis which is inevitably arriving. All the contrivances of wit and cunning are exhausted. For the future, honesty must replace genius. Side by side with the evidence of our calamities must be placed the evidence of their remedy. All must be reduced to the simplicity of an account-book—drawn up by good sense, kept by good faith."

This speech obtained for its author general en-

comiums: it was praised in the boudoir of the fine lady, for the elegance of its style; in the country house of the banker, for the soundness of its views; even the Faubourg St. Germain acknowledged that M. de Talleyrand, though a *scélérat* (a rascal), was a statesman, and that in those iniquitous times a *scélérat*, a man of quality, and a statesman, might be useful to his country. Such universal popularity did not last long. In the following month (January 31, 1790), the liberal bishop declared himself in favour of conferring upon a Jew the rights of a French citizen. This opinion—considered by many as a double outrage against the distinctions hitherto maintained between castes and between creeds—admitted of no pardon from a large portion of that society which M. de Talleyrand had formerly frequented; and I have read, in some tale of the time, that the Marquis de Travanet, a famous player of "tric-trac," used subsequently to say, in making what is called "*la case du diable*," "*je fais la case de l'évêque d'Autun.*"

A man's reputation, however, when parties run high, is not unfrequently made by his opponents; and the name of M. de Talleyrand now rose in the country and the Assembly just in proportion as it sank in the circles of the court and amongst

the extreme partisans of priestly intolerance and royal prerogative.

Few persons had, in fact, rendered such important services to the cause which he had espoused. To his endeavours, as we have seen, it was mainly owing that the clergy joined the commons in the church of St. Louis, and thus constituted the States-General. Shortly afterwards, by contending against the imperative nature of those orders which the members of the States-General had received from their constituents, he had aided in no small degree in releasing the National Assembly from the instructions which would otherwise have fettered its progress. Elected a member of the committee, appointed to prepare the new constitution which was to be given to France, his labours had been amongst the most valuable of that body, and the future rights of Frenchmen had been proclaimed in the words which he had suggested as most appropriate. Evincing on all questions of finance that knowledge of principles which produces clearness of statement, he had ably assisted M. Necker in the measures by which that statesman had sought to reassure public credit and raise the revenue; and, finally, he had delivered up the wealth and power of his own order, as

a sacrifice (such, at least, was his pretension) to the public weal.

The part which he had taken in the proceedings of the Assembly was, indeed, so considerable, that it was thought that no one could be better qualified to explain and defend its conduct. With such an explanation or defence he was charged; and he executed his task in a sort of memoir or manifesto to the French nation. This manifesto was read in the National Assembly on the 10th of February, 1790, and subsequently published and circulated throughout France. It has long since been forgotten amongst the many papers of a similar kind which have marked and justified the successive changes that France has for the last eighty years undergone.

But the skill and address of its composition was the subject of universal praise at the time of its appearance, and it still remains a remarkable exhibition of the ideas, and a skilful and able attempt to vindicate the actions, of an epoch which is yet awaiting the final judgment of posterity.

XXI.

The memoir or manifesto, to which I have been alluding, announced the abolition of privileges, the reform of the church, the institution of a National Assembly, and a National Guard; and promised a new system of taxation, and a general plan of education. It was read, as I have said, on the 10th of February, and on the 16th of the same month its author was named president of that assembly * by a majority of three hundred and seventy-five votes to one hundred and twenty-five, although the Abbé Sieyès—no mean rival—was his competitor.

This honour received additional solidity from a most able report in favour of the uniformity of weights and measures, which M. de Talleyrand made to the Assembly on the 30th April, 1790: a report which, carrying out the idea that Turgot had been anxious to establish, and furnishing a method for destroying the inconvenient distinctions which separated province from province, laid the foundation for that uniform system which

* The presidency was only for fifteen days; but the consideration in which this dignity was held may be estimated by the fact that Mirabeau, notwithstanding his utmost efforts, was unable to obtain it until the subsequent year.

now prevails throughout the French dominions. Nor would M. de Talleyrand have applied this project merely to France; he at the same time suggested that commissions from the Academy of Sciences in Paris and the Royal Society in London should be appointed to fix on some natural unity for measure and weight, which should be alike applicable to England and France. "*Chacune des deux nations,*" he added, "*formerait sur cette mesure ses étalons, qu'elle conserverait avec le plus grand soin, de telle sorte que si, au bout de plusieurs siècles, on s'apercevait de quelque variation dans l'année sidérale, les étalons pussent servir à l'évaluer, et par là à lier ce point important du système du monde à une grande époque—celle de l'Assemblée Nationale. Peut-être même est-il permis de voir dans ce concours de deux nations interrogeant ensemble la nature, pour en obtenir un résultat important, le principe d'une union politique, operée par l'entremise des sciences.*" *

* "Each of the two nations should by this means form its standards, which it ought to preserve with the greatest care, so that if, at the end of several centuries, any variation in the sidereal year should be perceived, the standards might serve to ascertain its extent, and in this way to connect this important point in the system of the universe with a mighty epoch, such as that of the National Assembly. Perhaps, even we may be permitted to foresee in this co-operation of two nations, together interrogating nature to obtain from her an important solution, the principle of a political union brought about by the intervention of the sciences."

It is impossible not to sympathise with a conception at once so elevated and so practical as that which is here expressed; and rejoice at thus finding an example of what Bacon—himself no less a statesman than a philosopher—claims as the attribute of men of science and letters, viz.: that when they do give themselves up to public affairs, they carry thereunto a spirit more lofty and comprehensive than that which animates the mere politician.

The greater part of the work which the Assembly had proposed to itself, was now terminated. The old monarchy and aristocracy were destroyed; the new powers of the crown and the people were defined; the new divisions of the country into departments, districts, and communes, were marked out; the new organisation of the tribunals of justice was decreed. No one entirely approved of the constitution thus to be created, but there was an almost universal satisfaction at its being so nearly completed.

TALLEYRAND

THE POLITIC MAN.

PART II.

Blesses the standard of France at festival of the 14th of July.—Increasing financial distress.—M. de Talleyrand's views.—Civil constitution of the clergy.—M. de Talleyrand's conduct.—Refuses archbishopric of Paris.—Letter to editors of Chronicle.—Mirabeau's death.—Sketch of his career, and relations with M. de Talleyrand, who attends his death-bed.—Probabilities as to his having initiated M. de Talleyrand into plots of Court.—Leaves M. de Talleyrand his intended speech on the law of succession, which regulated the present state of the law in France, and which M. de Talleyrand read in the National Assembly.—M. de Talleyrand suspended from his episcopal functions, and quits the Church.—The King's flight.—Conduct and views of M. de Talleyrand.—Wishes to aid the King.—Foolish conduct of Court party.—Fatal decree of National Assembly, forbidding the re-election of its members.—M. de Talleyrand's project of education.—Assembly closes the 13th of September, 1791.—M. de Talleyrand goes to England, January 1792.

PART II.

FROM THE FESTIVAL OF THE 14TH OF JULY TO THE CLOSE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

I.

WE are arrived at the festival of the 14th of July, held to celebrate the destruction of the Bastille, and to do honour to the new government which had risen on its ruins: let us pause for a moment on that day of joy!

An immense and magnificent amphitheatre is erected on the Champ de Mars: there the hereditary sovereign of France, and the temporary president of an elected assembly—the joint symbols of two ideas and of two epochs—are seated on two equal thrones, resplendent with the arms which the nation has taken from its ancient kings; and there is the infant prince, on whom an exulting people look kindly as the inheritor of his father's engagements, and who is to perpetuate the race of Saint Louis: and there is that queen, "decorating and cheering the sphere she moves in, glit-

tering like the morning star, full of life, and splendour, and joy;" and there that royal maiden, beauteous with the charms of the palace, blessed with the virtues of the cloister—a princess, a saint —destined to be a martyr! And there is the vain but honest Lafayette, leaning on his citizen sword: and there the terrible Mirabeau—his long hair streaming to the wind: and there that well-known and still memorable Assembly, prematurely proud of its vaunted work, which, alas! like the spectacle we are assisting at, is to be the mere pageant of a day. And, behold, in yonder balcony, the most graceful and splendid court in Europe, for such even at that time was still the court of France; and lo! in the open space, yon confederated bands, bearing their respective banners, and representing every portion of that great family which at this moment is rejoicing over the triumph it has achieved. On a sudden the sky—the light of which mingles so well with the joy of men, but which had hitherto been dark and sullen—on a sudden the sky clears up, and the sun blends his pomp with that of this noble ceremony! And now, robed in his pontifical garments, and standing on an altar thronged by three hundred priests, in long white robes and tricoloured

girdles, the Bishop of Autun blesses the great standard, the oriflamme of France, no longer the ensign of war, but the sign and token of peace between the past and the future—between the old recollections and the new aspirations of the French people.

Who, that had been present that day in Paris, could have believed that those who wept tenderly with the children of Bearne, at the foot of the statue of Henry IV., would so soon laugh horribly round the scaffold of his descendant? that the gay multitude, wandering in the Champs Elysées, amidst garlands of light, and breathing sounds of gentle happiness and affection, would so soon be the ferocious mob, massacreing in the prisons, murdering in the public streets, dancing round the guillotine dripping with innocent blood? that the monarch, the court, the deputies, every popular and princely image of this august pageant, the very forms of the religion with which it was consecrated, would in two or three brief years be scoffingly cast away: and that even the high priest of that gorgeous solemnity, no longer attached to his sacred calling, would be wandering a miserable exile on foreign shores, banished as a traitor to the liberty for which he had sacrificed the pre-

judices of his caste, the predilections of his family, the honours and wealth of his profession?

II.

From the 14th of July, 1789, to the 14th of July, 1790, the scenes which were comprehended in this, which may be called the first act in the great drama then agitating France, were upon the whole such as rather to excite the hopes than the fears of mankind; but from the latter period the aspect of things greatly changed, and almost each day became marked by some disappointment as to the success of a favourite scheme, or the fortune of a popular statesman.

On the 4th of September, 1790, M. Necker left almost unnoticed, and altogether unregretted, that Paris to which but a year before he had returned amidst unanimous acclamation. About the same time, Mirabeau began to be suspected; and the shouts of "Vive Lafayette!" were not unfrequently changed into "à bas Lafayette!"* by the ever fickle multitude. At this period also it

* "La popularité de M. de Lafayette qui s'était élevée si haut commençait à décliner de ce jour là (14 July): un mois plus tard, les cris 'à bas Lafayette!' avaient succédé aux cris de 'Vive Lafayette!'"—(*Comte de la Marck.*)

became apparent that the sale of the church property, which, properly managed, might have restored order to the finances, was likely, on the contrary, to render the national bankruptcy more complete.

In order to give a just idea of the conduct of M. de Talleyrand, it is necessary that I should explain rapidly how this calamity occurred. The Assembly, desiring to secure the irrevocability of its decrees by disposing as soon as possible of the vast estate which it had declared was to be sold, and desiring also to increase its financial resources without delay, looked out for some means by which this double end could be accomplished. After two or three projects, for a moment taken up and then abandoned, the idea finally adopted was that of issuing State notes, representing a certain value of national property, and giving them a forced currency, so that they would have an immediate value independent of that which they acquired as the representatives of property.

These notes or bonds, in short, thus became money; and they had this advantage over ordinary paper money, that they represented something which had a positive value; and as the first issue of four hundred millions of francs took place

at a time when some substitute was really required for the coin which every one, from alarm and want of confidence, had then begun to hoard, its effects were rather beneficial than the reverse. The Assembly instantly thought it had an inexhaustible fund at its disposal; consequently a new issue of eight hundred million bonds followed shortly after the first issue of four hundred millions, as a matter of course; and it became evident that this mode of meeting the current wants of the State was to be adopted to a greater and greater extent, thereby increasing the currency in a manner not in any way called for by the increased wealth or business of the community, and altering the value of money in all the transactions of life. M. de Talleyrand at once foresaw the calamities to which this system would naturally lead; and saying, "*Je serais inconsolable si de la rigueur de nos décrets sur le clergé il ne résultait pas le salut de la chose publique,*"* demonstrated, with a singular clearness and sagacity, that the course on which the Assembly had entered must inevitably cause the total disappearance of bullion, an enormous rise in provisions, a daily

* "I should be inconsolable if the severity of our decrees as to the clergy should not produce as its result the salvation of the State."—See *Appendix.*

depreciation of State paper and of land (such State paper representing land), a rapid variation of exchanges, an impossibility of all regular commerce.

But men in desperate times disregard ultimate results. The Assembly wanted funds at the moment: forced assignats created those funds; and when Mirabeau shrewdly observed that to multiply assignats was, at all events, to multiply adherents to the Revolution, since no man who had an assignat could wish the property on which its value depended to be restored to its former possessors, this political argument settled the financial one.

III.

The great characteristic of modern legislation is the principle of representation by election. It by no means follows, however, that because it has been an invaluable discovery to make a portion of government depend upon a particular principle, that every portion of a government should be deduced from that principle. On the contrary, the mobility given to a government by any system that introduces into it the popular passions and

variations of opinion, requires some counteracting element of fixity and stability to give permanence to its duration, and steadiness to its action. But the National Assembly—like those invalids who, having found a remedy for their disease, fancy that if a little of such remedy does some good, a great deal must do much more—made the whole of their institutions, with one exception, depend upon the same basis; and as their chamber was elective, their municipalities elective—so their judges were to be elective, and their clergy and bishops elective also.

Here commenced the first serious schism in the nation, for that which had hitherto existed had been between the nation and the court. I have said that the clergy, and more especially the higher clergy, had not willingly abandoned the property which they had been accustomed to consider theirs. This loss, however, furnished them with but a worldly cause of feud; it neither affected their consciences, nor the consciences of their flocks. But the new regulations, whatever their intrinsic merits, entirely changed the existing condition of the Roman church, and struck at the root of its discipline. These regulations, consequently, were denounced by the Pope, and could

not be solemnly accepted by the more zealous of the priesthood.

In such circumstances it would have been far wiser to have left the spiritual condition of the clergy untouched. To oblige all ecclesiastics either to give up their benefices, or to swear to uphold the "Civil Constitution of the Clergy" (such being the title given to the new system), was to provoke many who might otherwise have been silent to declare hostility to the Revolution; and at the same time gave to the Revolution itself that persecuting bias by which it was finally disgraced and ruined. Such a measure, besides, divided the clergy into two classes—one of which excited the veneration of the people by its sacrifices, and the indignation of the government by its complaints: the other satisfied the government by its obedience, but lost the respect of the people by its servility. A Catholic clergy disowned by the Pope was useless to those professing the Catholic religion; any clergy at all was superfluous to those who professed no religion whatsoever. The course which M. de Talleyrand observed in this business was wary and cautious up to the moment at which it was bold and decided.

The Assembly had determined upon the "Civil

Constitution of the Clergy," prior to the 14th of July. The King, however, had requested a delay with the intention of referring to Rome, and the law did not finally pass the Legislature till the 27th of November.

The struggle during this period was between the Sovereign and the Pope on the one side, and the philosophers and the church reformers —for both took a part in the matter—on the other.

It was disagreeable for a bishop, still looking to ecclesiastical preferment, to venture to quarrel with one party in the dispute, and equally disagreeable for a statesman aspiring to popular authority to separate himself from the other. The result of the contest, also, was for a while uncertain; and as there was no absolute necessity for the Bishop of Autun to express any opinion upon its merits, he was silent. But when the Assembly had pronounced its final decree, and that decree had received the formal though reluctant assent of the King, the case was different. A law had been regularly passed, and the question was, not whether it was a good law, but whether, being a law, it was to be obeyed. A battle had been fought, and the question was, not whether the victors were in the

right, but whether it was better to join with those who had conquered, or with those who had been conquered.

In this condition of things M. de Talleyrand rarely hesitated. He took his side with the law against the church, and with those who were daily becoming more powerful, against those who were daily becoming more feeble; and having once taken a step of this kind, it was never his custom to do so timidly.

He at once took the required oath, which all his episcopal brethren—with the notorious and not very creditable exceptions of the bishops of Babylon and Lydia, whose titles were purely honorary—refused to take. He also justified this course in a letter to the clergy of his own department, and ultimately undertook to consecrate the new bishops who were elected to supply the place of those whom the Assembly had deprived of their dioceses.

We shall presently see the results of this conduct. But it may be as well at once to state, that although M. de Talleyrand accepted for himself those new regulations for his church which the State, in spite of the head of his church, had established, and took an oath to obey them without unwillingness, and although he even maintained that the

State, considering the clergy as public functionaries enjoying a salary in compensation for the performance of public duties, might deprive any members of the clergy of such salary if they would not submit to the laws of the government which paid and employed them; he nevertheless contended, boldly and consistently and at all times, that all ecclesiastics thus dispossessed would have a right to the pension which, at the time of confiscating the church property, had been granted to any ecclesiastic whom the suppression of religious establishments or of useless benefices left without income or employment; a principle at first accepted as just, but soon condemned as inexpedient; for there is no compromise between parties when one is conscientiously disposed to resist what it deems an act of injustice, and the other resolutely determined to crush what it deems a selfish opposition.

IV.

Amidst the various vacancies which were occasioned by the refusal of the high dignitaries of the church to take the oath which the Constitution now exacted from them, was that of the archbishopric of Paris; and as it was known that

M. de Talleyrand could be elected for this post if he so desired it, the public imagined that he intended to take advantage of his popularity and obtain what, up to that period, had been so honourable and important a position. In consequence of this belief a portion of the press extolled his virtues; whilst another painted and, as usual in such cases, exaggerated his vices.

M. de Talleyrand was, up to the last hour of his life, almost indifferent to praise, but singularly enough (considering his long and varied career), exquisitely sensitive to censure; and his susceptibility on this occasion so far got the better of his caution, as to induce him to write and publish a letter in the *Moniteur*, of Paris, September 8th, 1791.

Letter of M. de Talleyrand to the editors of the "Chronicle," respecting his candidature for the diocese of Paris.

"GENTLEMEN,

"I have just read in your paper that you have been good enough to name me as a candidate for the archbishopric of Paris. I cannot but feel myself highly flattered by this nomination: some of the electors have in fact given me to understand

that they would be happy to see me occupy the post to which you have alluded, and I, therefore, consider that I ought to publish my reply. No, gentlemen, I shall not accept the honour of which my fellow-citizens are so obliging as to think me worthy.

"Since the existence of the National Assembly, I may have appeared indifferent to the innumerable calumnies in which different parties have indulged themselves at my expense. Never have I made, nor ever shall I make, to my calumniators the sacrifice of one single opinion or one single action which seems to me beneficial to the commonwealth: but I can and will make the sacrifice of my personal advantage, and on this occasion alone my enemies will have influenced my conduct. I will not give them the power to say that a secret motive caused me to take the oath I have recently sworn. I will not allow them the opportunity of weakening the good which I have endeavoured to effect.

"That publicity which I give to the determination I now announce, I gave to my wishes when I stated how much I should be flattered at becoming one of the administrators of the department of Paris. In a free state, the people of which have repossessed themselves of the right of election—*i.e*,

the true exercise of their sovereignty—I deem that to declare openly the post to which we aspire, is to invite our fellow-citizens to examine our claims before deciding upon them, and to deprive our pretensions of all possibility of benefiting by intrigue. We present ourselves in this way to the observations of the impartial, and give even the prejudiced and the hostile the opportunity to do their worst.

"I beg then to assure those who, dreading what they term my ambition, never cease their slanders against my reputation, that I will never disguise the object to which I have the ambition to pretend.

"Owing, I presume, to the false alarm caused by my supposed pretensions to the see of Paris, stories have been circulated of my having lately won in gambling houses the sum of sixty or seventy thousand francs. Now that all fear of seeing me elevated to the dignity in question is at an end, I shall doubtless be believed in what I am about to say. The truth is, that, in the course of two months, I gained the sum of about thirty thousand francs, not at gambling houses, but in private society, or at the chess-club, which has always been regarded, from the nature of its institution, as a private house.

"I here state the facts without attempting to justify them. The passion for play has spread to a troublesome extent. I never had a taste for it, and reproach myself the more for not having resisted its allurements. I blame myself as a private individual, and still more as a legislator who believes that the virtues of liberty are as severe as her principles: that a regenerated people ought to regain all the austerity of morality, and that the National Assembly ought to be directed towards this vice as one prejudicial to society, inasmuch as it contributes towards that inequality of fortune which the laws should endeavour to prevent by every means which do not interfere with the eternal basis of social justice, viz., the respect for property.

"You see I condemn myself. I feel a pleasure in confessing it; for since the reign of truth has arrived, in renouncing the impossible honour of being faultless, the most noble manner we can adopt of repairing our errors is to have the courage to acknowledge them.

"TALLEYRAND A. E. D'AUTUN."

From this document we learn that the Bishop of Autun, notwithstanding his labours in the As-

sembly, was still a gay frequenter of the world: to be found pretty frequently at the chess-club, as well as in private society; and, though he lamented over the fact, a winner at such places of thirty thousand francs within two months. We also learn that he abandoned at the moment the idea of advancement in his profession, in order to maintain unimpeached the motives of his conduct in the National Assembly, and we may divine that he looked for the future rather to political than to ecclesiastical preferment.

The most striking portion of this document, however, is the tone and style — I may almost say the cant — which prevails towards its conclusion. But every epoch has its pretensions: and that of the period which intervened between May, 1789, and August, 1792, was to decorate the easy life of a dissolute man of fashion with the pure language of a Christian and a saint, or the stern precepts of a philosopher. "*Le dire,*" says old Montaigne, "*est autre chose que le faire: il faut considérer le prêche à part, et le prêcheur à part.*"*

* "Saying is quite a different thing from doing: the preaching and the preacher must be considered apart."

V.

And now, or but a little after this time, might have been seen an agitated crowd, weeping, questioning, and rushing towards a house in the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. It was in the first days of April, and in that house — receiving through the open windows the balmy air which for a moment refreshed his burning forehead, and welcoming yet more gratefully the anxious voice of the inquiring multitude—lay the dying Mirabeau, about to carry into the tomb all the remaining wisdom and moderation of the people; and, as he himself sadly and proudly added, all the remaining fragments of that monarchy which he had shown the power to pull down and had flattered himself he might have the power to reconstruct. By his death-bed stood the Bishop of Autun. It was a curious combination of circumstances which thus brought together these two personages, whose characters were essentially different, but whose position was in some respects the same. The one was eloquent, passionate, overbearing, imprudent; the other cool, urbane, logical, and cautious. But both were of illustrious families, endowed with

great abilities, ejected from their legitimate place in society. Both also were liberal in their politics, and this from vengeance and ambition, as well as from principle and opinion. Aristocrats allied with a democratic faction; monarchists in desperate conflict with those by whom monarchy was most held in reverence; they had engaged in a battle for moderation with extreme auxiliaries, and extreme opponents. Mirabeau, the fifth child, but, by the death of a brother, the eldest son of the Marquis de Mirabeau (a rich proprietor of a noble house in Provence), had been, when very young, married to a wealthy heiress, and intended for the profession of arms. Nevertheless, quitting his profession, separated from his wife, constantly involved in scrapes—now for money, now for love—he had led a bachelor's life of intrigue, indigence, and adventure, up to the age of forty, alternately the victim of his own wild nature and of the unwise and absurd severity of his father, whose two pursuits in life were persecuting his family and publishing pamphlets for the benefit of mankind. Thus, frequently in confinement—always in difficulties (the first and last means of correction with the old marquis being to procure a "*lettre de cachet*," and to stop his son's allowance), the

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Comte de Mirabeau had supported himself almost entirely by his talents, which could apply themselves to letters, though action was their proper sphere.

During a short interval in his various calamities —an interval which he had passed at Paris in a desperate effort to better his condition—he had become acquainted with M. de Talleyrand, who, struck by his abilities and affected by his misfortunes, recommended him to M. de Calonne, at whose suggestion he was sent by M. de Vergennes, then minister of foreign affairs, on a sort of secret mission into Germany, just prior to the Great Frederick's death. From this mission he returned when France was being agitated by the convocation of the "notables," speedily succeeded by that of the States-General. He saw at a glance that an era was now approaching, suited to his eminent talents, and in which his haughty but flexible character was likely to force or insinuate its way; his whole soul, therefore, was bent upon being one of that assembly, which he from the first predicted would soon command the destinies of his country.

Certain expenses were necessary to obtain this object, and, as usual, Mirabeau had not a farthing.

The means which he adopted for procuring the money he required were the least creditable he could have devised. He published a work called "The Secret History of the Court of Berlin," a work full of scandal, public and private, and betraying the mission with which he had recently been intrusted.*

The government was naturally indignant; a prosecution was instituted against him before the Parliament of Paris.; M. de Montmorin, and others, by whom he had previously been patronised, told him plainly they wished to drop his acquaintance.

Through all these disgraceful difficulties Mirabeau scrambled. He denied that the work was published by his authority.

Rejected from their sittings by the nobility of Provence, who decreed that, having no fiefs of his own, and being merely invested with his father's voice, he had no right to sit among the nobles, he became the successful candidate of the tiers-

* A defence has been set up for Mirabeau, viz., that the work, though written by him, was published without his knowledge by a bookseller's wife, his mistress. But besides the utter improbability of this story, there is the fact that Mirabeau remained until his death on the best terms with the person who would thus have betrayed a most sacred trust and merited his bitterest contempt and indignation.

état for Aix; and at the meeting of the States-General, stood before the ministry which had accused, and the aristocracy which had repudiated him, a daring and formidable enemy.

But, though made a desperate man by circumstances, he was not so either by inclination or by ideas.

His views for France were limited to the procuring it a representative government; and his views for himself were those which frequently lead ambitious men under such a government to adopt opposition as a road to power. "*Tribun par calcul*," as was justly said of him by a contemporary,* "*aristocrate par goût.*" He aimed at obtaining for his country a constitution, and being minister of the crown under that constitution.

M. de Talleyrand had the same wish, and probably the same ambition. These two statesmen, therefore, would naturally, at the meeting of the States-General, have acted together as two private friends who thought the same on public matters. But the publication of "The Secret History of the Court of Berlin," offensive to the minister who had employed Mirabeau, could not be otherwise than painful and disagreeable to M. de Talleyrand, at

* See *Les Considérations sur la Révolution*, by Madame de Staël.

whose intercession Mirabeau had been employed, and to whom, indeed, Mirabeau's correspondence had been principally addressed. This circumstance had, therefore, produced a cessation of all private intimacy between these two personages who were about to exercise so great an influence over approaching events. It is difficult, however, for two men to act a prominent part on the same side for any length of time in a popular assembly, and this at a great national crisis, without relapsing into an old acquaintance, or forming a new one. To what extent the old relations between Mirabeau and M. de Talleyrand were thus renewed, it is difficult to say, but that on the 21st of October, 1789, they already talked together with some degree of intimacy is evident from a letter of Mirabeau to the Comte de la Marck, in which letter Mirabeau states that he had been told the history of a secret political intrigue by the Bishop of Autun.*

About this time, too, it is now known that Mirabeau projected a ministry to which I have already alluded, and in which he and M. de Talleyrand were to be united. Had this ministry been formed, it is very possible that the history

* See *Appendix.*

of France during the next sixty years would have been different.

But the most fatal measure adopted by the Assembly was that (November 9, 1789) which prevented any member of the Assembly from being minister during the continuance of the Assembly, and from entering the service of the crown for two years after its dissolution. The consequences of this resolution, aimed at those who, like Mirabeau and Talleyrand, were hoping to erect a constitutional government, and to have the direction of it, were incalculable. The persons at that time who had most influence in the Assembly and the country were men with moderate opinions, great talents, and great ambition. Had such men been placed at the head of affairs they might have controlled them and established a government at once popular and safe. But this new regulation prevented those who had become favourites with the National Assembly and the nation, from using their influence in supporting the executive power. It drove them, moreover, if their passions were violent and their positions desperate, to seek for power by means hostile to the constitution which annihilated their hopes.

It had this effect upon Mirabeau; and his sentiments becoming known to the court, a sort of alliance established itself between them in the spring of 1790;—an alliance entered into too late (since most of the great questions on which Mirabeau's influence might have been useful were already decided) and most absurdly carried on; for whilst the King opened to Mirabeau his purse, he shut from him his confidence, and at first, and for a long time, exacted that the compact he had entered into with the great orator should be kept altogether secret, even from his own ministers.*

Mirabeau was to advise the King in secret, to help him indirectly in public; but he was not to have the King's countenance, and he was to be thwarted and opposed by the King's friends.

The error which both parties to this arrangement committed was the result of the feeble and irresolute character of the one who never did anything wholly and sincerely, and of the over-bold and over-confident character of the other, who never doubted that whatever he attempted must

* When M. Mercy, the Austrian ambassador, and for a long time the intermediate agent between the court and Mirabeau, left Paris, M. de Montmorin, the minister of foreign affairs, was, without the knowledge of his colleagues, admitted into the secret of the court's engagements, and authorised to correspond with Mirabeau concerning their execution.

succeed, and who now easily persuaded himself that having vanquished the difficulty of opening a communication with the court, he should promptly vanquish that of governing it. Indeed, the desire of Mirabeau to serve the crown being sincere, and his ability to do so evident, he (not unnaturally perhaps) felt convinced that his sincerity would be trusted, and his talents given fair play.

But it is clear that the King thought of buying off a dangerous enemy, and not of gaining a determined ally. Thus he went on supplying Mirabeau's wants, receiving Mirabeau's reports, attending little to Mirabeau's counsels, until matters got so bad that even the irresolution of Louis XVI. was vanquished (this was about the end of 1790), and then, for the first time, was seriously entertained a plan which the daring orator had long ago advised, but which the court had never, up to that period, rejected nor yet sanctioned.

This plan consisted in withdrawing the King from Paris; surrounding him with troops still faithful, and by the aid of a new assembly, for which public opinion was to be prepared, reforming the constitution—now on the point of being completed—a constitution which, while it pretended to be monarchical, not only prevented the

monarch from practically exercising any power without the express permission of a popular assembly, but established, as its fundamental theory, that the King was merely the executor of that assembly's sovereign authority: an addition which, at first sight, may seem of small importance, but which, as it was calculated daily to influence the spirit of men's actions, could not but have an immense effect on the daily working of their institutions. Nor was this all. Nations, like individuals, have, so to speak, two wills: that of the moment—the result of passion, caprice, and impulse; and that of leisure and deliberation—the result of foresight, prudence, and reason. All free governments possessing any solidity (whatever their appellation) have, for this reason, contained a power of some kind calculated to represent the maturer judgment of the people and to check the spontaneous, violent, and changeful ebullitions of popular excitement. Even this barrier, however, was not here interposed between a chamber which was to have all the influence in the State, and a chief magistrate who was to have none.

The constitution about to be passed was, in short, an impracticable one, and no person saw this more clearly than Mirabeau; but, whilst ready

and desirous to destroy it, he by no means lent himself to the ideas, though he was somewhat subjugated by the charms, of Marie-Antoinette.

"Je serai ce que j'ai été toujours," he says in a letter to the King, 15th December, 1790, "défenseur du pouvoir monarchique réglé par les lois; apôtre de la liberté garantie par le pouvoir monarchique."*

He undertook, in short, the difficult and almost impossible enterprise of rescuing liberty at the same time from a monarch in the hands of courtiers enthusiastic for absolute power, and from a mob under the influence of clubs which looked forward to destroying all authority but their own.

I have narrated what had undoubtedly been Mirabeau's projects; for we have to consider what were probably his thoughts when, in acute suffering but with an unclouded mind and a clear prescience of his approaching dissolution, he summoned his former friend, with whom, it is said, he was never till that instant completely reconciled, to the couch from which he was no more to rise.

* "I shall be what I have always been, the defender of the monarchical power, regulated by the laws; the apostle of liberty, guaranteed by the monarchical power."

Must we not suppose that Mirabeau in this, his last conversation with M. de Talleyrand, spoke of the schemes which then filled his mind? And does it not seem probable that he at that hour conceived the Bishop of Autun to be the person best fitted to fill the difficult position which he himself was about to leave vacant, and amidst the various intrigues and combinations of which it required so much skill to steer?

For this supposition there are many plausible reasons. M. de Talleyrand, like Mirabeau, was an aristocrat by birth, a liberal by circumstances and opinion; he was also one of the members of the Assembly, who possessed the greater authority over that portion of it which Mirabeau himself influenced; and likewise one of a very small number of members upon whom M. de Montmorin, the minister with whom Louis XVI. at last consented that Mirabeau should confidentially communicate, had told Mirabeau, he most relied. Lastly, he was acquainted with all the classes and almost all the individuals then seeking to disturb, or hoping to compose, the disordered elements of society. He knew the court, the clergy, the Orleanists. He had been one of the founders of the Jacobins; he was a member of its moderate

rivals, the Feuillans; and, although, undoubtedly, he wanted the fire and eloquence necessary to command in great assemblies, he was pre-eminent in the tact and address which enable a man to manage those by whom such assemblies are led.

In short, though Mirabeau left no Mirabeau behind him, M. de Talleyrand was, perhaps, the person best qualified to supply his loss, and the one whom Mirabeau himself was most likely to have pointed out for a successor. I have no clue, however, beyond conjecture, to guide me on this subject, unless the public trust which Mirabeau confided to M. de Talleyrand in his last hours, may be cited as testimony of his other and more secret intentions. What this trust was, we may learn from the statement of M. de Talleyrand himself, who, on the following day, amidst a silence and a sorrow which pervaded all parties (for a man of superior genius, whatever his faults, rarely dies unlamented), ascending the tribune of the National Assembly, said in a voice which appeared unfeignedly affected:

"I went yesterday to the house of M. de Mirabeau. An immense crowd filled that mansion, to which I carried a sentiment more sorrowful than the public grief. The spectacle of woe before me

filled the imagination with the image of death; it was everywhere but in the mind of him whom the most imminent danger menaced. He had asked to see me. It is needless to relate the emotion which many things he said caused me. But M. de Mirabeau was at that time above all things the man of the public; and in this respect we may regard as a precious relic the last words which could be saved from that mighty prey, on which death was about to seize. Concentrating all his interest on the labours that still remain to this Assembly, he remembered that the law of succession was the order of the day, and lamented he could not assist at the discussion of the question, regretting death, because it deprived him of the power of performing a public duty. But, as his opinion was committed to writing, he confided the manuscript to me, in order that I might in his name communicate it to you. I am going to execute this duty. The author of the manuscript is now no more; and so intimately were his wishes and thoughts connected with the public weal, that you may imagine yourselves catching his last breath, as you listen to the sentiments which I am about to read to you."

Such were the words with which M. de Talley-

rand prefaced the memorable discourse which, in establishing the principles on which the law of inheritance has since rested in France, laid the foundations of a new French society, on a basis which no circumstance that can now happen seems likely to alter.

"There is as much difference," said Mirabeau, "between what a man does during his life, and what he does after his death, as between death and life. What is a testament? It is the expression of the will of a man who has no longer any will respecting property which is no longer his property; it is the action of a man no longer accountable for his actions to mankind; it is an absurdity, and an absurdity ought not to have the force of law."

Such is the argument set forth in this celebrated and singular speech. Ingenious rather than profound, it does not seem, as we turn to it coolly now, worthy of the reputation it attained, nor of the effect which it has undoubtedly produced. But, read in M. de Talleyrand's deep voice, and read as the last thoughts upon testamentary dispositions of a man who was making his own will when he composed it, and who had since then passed with his luminous intellect and marvellous

eloquence into the obscure silence of the grave, it could hardly fail to make a deep impression. It was, moreover, the mantle of the departed prophet; and the world, whether wrong or right in the supposition, fancied that it saw in this political legacy, the intention to designate a political successor.

VI.

Thus, M. de Talleyrand already, as we have seen, a member of the department of Paris, was immediately chosen to fill the place in the directorship of that department, an appointment which Mirabeau's death left vacant.

In this municipal council, considerable influence still existed; nor did it want various means for exercising that influence over the middle classes of the capital; so that a man of resolution and tact could have made it one of the most useful instruments for restoring the royal authority and consolidating it on new foundations.

It seems not unlikely, indeed, that M. de Talleyrand had the design of making it popular as the organ of good advice to the King, and of making the King popular by engaging him to listen to this

advice, since we find that it drew up an address on the 18th April (about a fortnight after Mirabeau's death) to him, urging him to put aside from his counsels those whom the nation distrusted, and to confide frankly in the men who were yet popular: whilst there is reason to believe, as I shall by and by have occasion to show, that M. de Talleyrand entered about this time into secret negotiations with the King, or, at least, offered him, through M. de Laporte, his best assistance.

But Louis XVI. was more likely to trust a bold and passionate man like Mirabeau, whom, notwithstanding his birth, he looked upon—considering the situation in which the Revolution had found him—as an adventurer who had been almost naturally his opponent, until he had purchased his support, rather than a man like M. de Talleyrand; a philosopher, a wit, who might be said to have been bred a courtier; and, on the other hand, M. de Talleyrand himself was too cautious to commit himself boldly and entirely to the daring and doubtful schemes which Mirabeau had prepared, until he saw a tolerable chance of their being successful.

Other circumstances, moreover, occurred at this time, which could not but have an unfavourable

influence as to the establishment of any serious concert between the scrupulous and mistrustful monarch, and the chess-playing, constitutional bishop.

VII.

When M. de Talleyrand rejected the archbishopric of Paris, it was clear that he expected nothing further from the church; and he no doubt from that moment conceived the idea of freeing himself from its trammels on the first decent opportunity: nor did he long wait for this opportunity, for, on the 26th of April, one day after his consecration of the Curé Expelles, the newly-elected Bishop of Finisterre, arrived a brief thus announced in the *Moniteur* of the 1st of May, 1791:

"*Le bref du Pape est arrivé jeudi dernier. De Talleyrand-Périgord, ancien évêque d'Autun, y est suspendu de toutes fonctions et excommunié, après quarante jours s'il ne revient pas a résipiscence.*" *

The moment had now come for that decisive measure which the unwilling ecclesiastic had for

* "The brief of the Pope arrived last Thursday. De Talleyrand-Périgord, the late Bishop of Autun, is suspended from all functions and excommunicated, if after forty days he has not repented."

some time contemplated; for he had too much tact to think of continuing his clerical office under the interdiction of the head of his church, and was by no means prepared to abandon his political career, and to reconcile himself with Rome, on the condition of separating himself from wealth and ambition. But one alternative remained—that of abandoning the profession into which he had been forced to enter. This he did at once, and without hesitation; appearing in the world henceforth (though sometimes styled in public documents the Abbé de Périgord, or the ancien évêque d'Autun) under the plain designation of M. de Talleyrand, a designation which I have already frequently applied to him, and by which, though he was destined to be raised to far higher titles, he has by universal consent descended to posterity. The act was a bold one; but, like most bold acts in difficult circumstances, it was not (I speak of it as a matter of worldly calculation) an imprudent one; for it released an indifferent priest from a position which he could only fill with decency by a constant hypocrisy, for which he was too indolent; and it delivered up an able statesman to a career for which, by the nature of his talents, he was peculiarly fitted. Neither was M. de Talleyrand's withdrawal

from the church so remarkable a fact at that moment as it would have been at any other; for France, and even Europe, were then overrun by French ex-ecclesiastics of all grades, who were prohibited from assuming their rank and unable to fulfil their duties, and who, in many cases, were obliged to conceal their real calling under that from which they earned a daily subsistence.

Nevertheless, the Bishop of Autun's particular case excited and merited attention. It had been, as an organ and representative of the French church, that this prelate had contributed in no slight degree to alienate its property and change its constitution; and now, his brethren in the French clergy being what he had made them, he voluntarily threw their habit from his shoulders and renounced all participation in their fate.

It might, it is true, be urged that none had lost more by the destruction of the ancient church and its institutions than himself, that he had originally become a priest against his inclinations, and that he was compelled to decide either against his convictions as a citizen or against his obligations as a churchman. Still, this desertion from his order by one who had been so conspicuous

a member of it, was undoubtedly a scandal, and though the world usually pardons those whom it has an interest to forgive, and though M. de Talleyrand, if he erred, had the consolation of living to see his errors forgiven or overlooked by many very rigid Catholics, who enjoyed his society, by many very pious princes, who wanted his services, and even by the Pope himself, when his holiness was in a situation to fear his enmity and require his good-will—he himself never felt entirely at his ease as to his early profession, and was so sensitive on the subject that the surest way to offend him was to allude to it. I was told by a lady, long intimate with M. de Talleyrand, that even the mention of the word "lawn" annoyed him.

As to Louis XVI., although making perpetual compromises with his conscience, he was of all persons the one most likely to be shocked by a bishop thus coolly converting himself into a layman; whilst it must be added that M. de Talleyrand was of all persons the one least likely to respect Louis XVI.'s scruples.

We may, therefore, reasonably suppose that whatever relations were indirectly kept up between them at this time, such relations were neither

intimate nor cordial, but rather those which men not unfrequently maintain with persons whom they neither like nor trust, but are ready to serve under or be served by, should circumstances arrive to render a closer connection mutually advantageous.

The King, however, had become more and more puzzled by the opposing advice of his various and never-trusted counsellors, and more and more dissatisfied with the prospect of having shortly to assent to a constitution which, in reality, he looked upon as an abdication. It was not surprising, therefore, that, on the morning of the 21st of June, it was discovered that he had, with his family, quitted Paris; and it was shortly afterwards ascertained that the fugitives had directed their course towards the north of France and the camp of M. de Bouillé.

It will be remembered that, to withdraw from the capital to the camp of this officer, in whose judgment, ability, and fidelity Louis XVI. most relied, was part of Mirabeau's old scheme.

But this was not all: the King, in a paper which he left behind him, stated that it was his intention to retire to some portion of his "kingdom where he could freely exercise his judgment, and there to

make such changes in the proposed constitution" (it was on the point of being terminated) "as were necessary to maintain the sanctity of religion, to strengthen the royal authority, and to consolidate a system of true liberty." A declaration of this kind (though the words I have cited were rather ambiguous) was also comprised in the scheme of Mirabeau.

Now, M. de Montmorin, the minister of foreign affairs—with one of whose passports the King had actually made his escape as a servant of a Madame de Korff—had been initiated, as we know, into Mirabeau's secrets, and M. de Talleyrand was one of M. de Montmorin's friends, and had been, as we have recently seen, by Mirabeau's bedside during his last hours. Hence it might be inferred, notwithstanding the causes which prevented any real sympathy or cordial understanding between the King and the ex-Bishop of Autun, that the latter was privy to the flight of the former, and prepared to take part in the plans of which that flight was to be the commencement.

Rumours, indeed, to this effect, concerning both M. de Montmorin and M. de Talleyrand, were for a moment circulated in Paris.

But M. de Montmorin proved to the satisfaction

of the Assembly that he was innocent of all participation in the King's evasion; and the reports respecting M. de Talleyrand never went further than to one or two of those journals which at that time disgraced the liberty of the press by their total indifference as to whether they published truth or falsehood.

It is also to be remarked that M. de Lafayette, who on that subject one must accept as a good authority, expressly charges the King with having left M. de Montmorin and his most intimate friends ignorant of his intentions.

"Il était ignoré," says M. de Lafayette, "de ses ministres, des royalistes de l'Assemblée, tous laissés exposés à un grand peril. Telle était la situation non seulement des gardes nationaux de service, de leurs officiers, mais des amis les plus dévoués du roi, du duc de Brissac, commandant des cent-suisses, et de M. de Montmorin qui avait très-innocement donné un passeport sous le nom de la baronne de Korff."*

* "The ministers, the royalists of the Assembly, were all left in ignorance of the King's intentions, and exposed to great peril. Such was the situation, not only of the National Guards and their officers, but also of the most devoted of the King's friends, the Duc de Brissac, commander of the Cent-Suisses, and M. de Montmorin, who had unwittingly given a passport in the name of the Baroness de Korff."

It is difficult to account for the inconsistency in Louis XVI.'s conduct, except by referring to the inconsistency of his character: I am, however, disposed to surmise that, after Mirabeau's death, he considered it would be impossible to unite a considerable portion of the Assembly and the army in one common plan; and that he then began carrying on at the same time two plans: the one relative to the policy he should pursue in the event of his stay in the capital, which he probably conducted through M. de Montmorin, who was intimate with the leading members of the constitutional party in the Assembly; the other relative to his flight, which he only entrusted to the general whose camp he was about to seek, and to those private friends and adherents who took little part in public affairs. It is further to be presumed that, according to his constant incertitude and indolence, never long or firmly fixed on any one project, he was scared by apprehensions of the mob at the moment when most disposed to remain quietly in his palace, and alarmed at the risk and trouble of moving when actually pressing the preparations for his journey.

In this manner we may best reconcile his writing to M. de Bouillé, to expect him at Montmedy

within a week of his declaring to the sovereigns of Europe (23rd April) that he was satisfied with his condition at Paris: in this manner, likewise, we may explain his solemnly assuring the general of the National Guard that he would not attempt to quit the Tuileries, only two or three days before he actually fled from them.*

He rarely did what he intended to do; and belied himself more frequently from change of intentions, than from intentional insincerity.

VIII.

At all events, it seems probable (returning to the fact with which we are in the present instance most concerned) that Louis XVI.'s departure took place without M. de Talleyrand's active assistance, but I do not think it probable that it was altogether without his knowledge.

The ex-Bishop had such a varied and extensive acquaintance that he was pretty certain to know what he wished to know; and it was according to his usual practice to contrive that he should not be

* "Ce prince (Louis XVI.) dont on ne peut trop déplorer le manque de bonne foi dans cette occasion, lui donna les assurances si positives, si solennelles, qu'il crût pouvoir répondre *sur sa tête* que le roi ne partirait pas."—*Mémoires de Lafayette.*

compromised if the King's projects failed, and yet that he should be in a situation to show that the King was indebted to him if those projects succeeded. It is useless to speculate on what might have occurred had the unfortunate monarch reached his destination; for travelling in a carriage peculiarly heavy and peculiarly conspicuous at the rate of three miles an hour, walking up the hills, putting his head out of the windows at the post-houses, Louis XVI. arrived at the place where he was to have met his escort, twenty hours later than the appointed time, and was finally stopped at the bridge of Varennes by a few resolute men, and re-conducted leisurely to the capital, amidst the insults of the provinces and the silence of Paris.

The important question then arose, What was to be done respecting him?

Was he to be deposed in favour of a republic? All contemporary writers agree that, at this moment, the idea of a republic was only in a few visionary minds. Was he to be deposed in favour of a new monarch, which, considering the emigration of his brothers and the infancy of his child, could only be in favour of a new dynasty? or, was he to be reinstated in the position he had quitted?

IX.

The views and conduct of M. de Talleyrand are at this crisis interesting. We have been told by contemporaries, that he and Sieyès were of opinion that there was a better chance of making the Revolution successful with a limited monarchy under a new chief, elected by the nation, than under the old one who claimed his throne in virtue of hereditary right; and we can easily understand their reasoning.

A king who had succeeded to a throne from which his ancestors had been accustomed for centuries to dictate absolutely to their people, could hardly be sincerely satisfied with possessing on sufferance a remnant of his ancestors' former authority; nor could a people be ever wholly without suspicion of a prince who had to forget the ideas with which he had received the sceptre before he could respect those which restricted the use of it.

Louis XVI., moreover, had attempted to escape from his palace, as a prisoner escaping from his gaol, and as a prisoner thus escaping he had been caught and brought back to his place of confinement.

*

It was difficult to make anything of a sovereign in this condition save a puppet, to be for a while the tool, and ere long the victim, of contending parties.

Now, M. de Talleyrand had always a leaning to the Orleans branch of the House of Bourbon: neither did he think so ill of the notorious personage who was then the representative of the Orleans family, as the contemporaries from whose report posterity has traced his portrait.

Of this prince he once said, in his own pithy manner, "Le duc d'Orléans est le vase dans lequel on a jeté toutes les ordures de la Révolution;"* and this was not untrue.

Philippe d'Orléans, indeed, who has figured in history under the nickname or *sobriquet* of "Egalité," was neither fitted for the part of a great sovereign in turbulent times nor for that of a quiet and obscure citizen at any more tranquil period. Nevertheless, he was not so bad a man as he has been represented; for both Legitimists and Republicans have been obliged to blacken his character in order to excuse their conduct to him.

His character has, furthermore, been mystified

* "The Duc d'Orléans is the vase into which people have thrown all the filth of the Revolution."

and exaggerated, as we have looked at it by the lurid glare of that unnatural vote which brings the later period of his life always prominently and horribly before us. Still, in reality, he was rather a weak man, led into villainous deeds by want of principle, than a man of a strong and villainous nature, who did not scruple at crimes when they seemed likely to advance his ambition. His only one strong passion was a desire to be talked about.

It is possible that the King, by skilful management, might have turned this ruling wish of his most powerful subject to the profit of his monarchy; for the young Duc de Chartres was at one time anxious to shine as an aspirant to military fame. The government, however, denied his request to be employed as became his rank; and when, despite of this denial, he engaged in a naval combat as a volunteer, the court unjustly and impoliticly spread reports against his courage. To risk his life in a balloon, to run riot in every extravagance of debauch, to profess the opinions of a republican though the first prince of the blood royal, were demonstrations of the same disposition which might have made him a gallant soldier, a furious bigot, a zealous royalist, and even a very tolerable constitutional monarch.

As to the various stories of his incessant schemes and complicated manœuvres for exciting the populace, debauching the soldiery, and seizing the crown, they are, in my opinion, no more worthy of credit than the tales which at the same period were equally circulated of Louis XVI.'s drunkenness, and Marie-Antoinette's debaucheries. Belonging to those whom Tacitus has described as "men loving idleness—though hating quiet," seeking popularity more than power, and with a character easily modelled by circumstances, I am by no means certain, that if M. de Talleyrand did think of bestowing on him what was afterwards called a "citizen crown" (it must be remembered that he had not then been lowered and disgraced by the follies or crimes into which he was subsequently led), the plan was not the best which could have been adopted. But there was one great and insurmountable obstacle to this design.

General Lafayette commanded the National Guard of Paris, and although his popularity was already on the wane, he was still—Mirabeau being dead—the most powerful citizen that had been raised up by the Revolution. He did not want to run new risks, nor to acquire greater power, nor

to have a monarch with more popularity or more authority than the runaway king.

Courageous rather than audacious, more avid of popularity than of power, a chivalric knight-errant, an amiable enthusiast, rather than a great captain, or a practical politician, the part which suited him was that of parading himself before the people as the guardian of the constitution, and before the sovereign as the idol of the nation. To this part he wished to confine himself; and the monarch under whom he could play it most easily was Louis XVI. Nor was this all.

Ambitious men may agree as to sharing the attributes of office; vain men will not agree as to sharing the pleasure of applause: and it is said that Lafayette never forgot that there was another bust, that of the Duc d'Orléans, carried about the streets of Paris together with his own, on the memorable day which saw the destruction of the Bastille. To any idea, therefore, of the Duc d'Orléans as King of France, he was decidedly opposed.

X.

Thus, after making just that sort of effort in favour of the younger branch of the Bourbons which left him free to support the elder one, if such effort proved abortive, M. de Talleyrand finally declared for Louis XVI., as the only person who could be monarch, if a monarchy could be preserved; and was also for giving this prince such a position as he might honourably accept with functions that he might really fulfil.

The King himself, it must be added, was now in a better disposition than he had hitherto been for frankly accepting the conditions of the new existence proposed to him.

A hero, or rather a saint, when it was required of his fortitude to meet danger or to undergo suffering, his nature was one of those which shrink from exertion, and prefer endurance to a struggle for either victory or escape.

It was with difficulty that he had been so far roused into action as to attempt his recent expedition; he had been disgusted with its trouble, more than awed by its peril. Death itself seemed preferable to another such effort.

He had seen, likewise, from the feeling of the provinces, and even from the infidelity of the troops, who, sent to escort him, might have attempted his rescue; but who, when told to cry, "*Vive le Roi!*" cried, "*Vive la Nation!*" that, even if he had reached M. de Bouillé's camp, it would have been difficult for that general, notwithstanding his firmness of character and military ability, to have placed the sovereign of France in any position within the French territory from which he might have dictated to, or even treated with, the French people. To quit Paris, therefore, a second time was evidently to quit France and to unite himself with, and to be subordinate to, that party of *émigrés* which had always preferred his younger brother, whose presumption had become insulting to his authority and offensive to Marie-Antoinette's pride.

On the other hand, many persons of note in the Assembly who had hitherto employed their talents and their popularity towards the weakening of the monarchical power, were at this juncture disposed to strengthen it.

Amongst the commissioners sent to conduct Louis XVI. from Varennes to Paris, was Barnave, an eloquent young lawyer, who, from a desire

to distinguish himself in a glorious rivalry with Mirabeau, had adopted that party in the Assembly which, whilst declaring itself against a republic, contended in all discussions and especially in the famous discussion on the *veto*, for abridging and in fact annihilating the royal authority. Struck by the misfortunes of Marie-Antoinette,—beauty never appearing so attractive to a generous heart as in the hour of distress,—and convinced, perhaps, by his own personal observations that Louis XVI. had in many respects been grossly calumniated, Barnave had at last adopted the views which had previously been formed by his great rival, whose ashes then slept in the Pantheon.

The two Lameths also, officers of noble birth, possessing some talent and more spirit, perceiving that by the course they had hitherto pursued they had raised up at each step more formidable rivals amongst the lower classes of society than any they would otherwise have had to encounter amongst the leaders of the nobility or the favourites of the court, were now as anxious to restrain the democracy which they hated, as Barnave was to assist the queen whom he loved; whilst many of all ranks, conscientiously in favour of liberty but as justly alarmed at anarchy, beginning to

consider it more important to curb the license of the mob and the clubs than that of the King and the government, were for rallying round the tottering throne and trying to give it a tolerable foundation of security.

XI.

For these reasons, then, there was a combination of interests, desires, and abilities in favour of establishing Louis XVI. at the head of such a constitution, as, if not the best possible, would have been the best possible at that time; and, every other rational project seeming out of the question, M. de Talleyrand entered, as I have said, into this one, although with less faith in its practicability than some of his coadjutors.

There were, however, at this moment circumstances which favoured it. An assemblage, collected together by the influence and exhortations of the most violent of the Jacobins for the purpose of signing a petition to the Assembly against the continuance of the monarchy, having given a sufficient pretext by its tumultuous character and excesses to justify the act, was dispersed by Lafayette at the head of the National Guard, and

with the authority of Bailly, mayor of Paris ;—that is, with the force and authority of the whole mass of the *bourgeoisie*, or middle class.

The Republicans were daunted. A revision of the constitution, moreover, was required ; for the desultory and inconsistent manner in which many of the measures of the Assembly had been voted, rendered it necessary to distinguish between those which were temporary in their character and those that were to remain fundamental laws of the State. This revision offered the opportunity of introducing changes of importance into the constitution itself, and amongst these a second chamber or senate.

To this addition even Lafayette consented ; although his opinion was that such second chamber should be elective, as in the United States (his constant model), and not hereditary as in England, which another section of public men—anxious to maintain an aristocracy as well as a monarchy—desired.

The moderate party, still powerful in the departments, in Paris, and in the National Guard, as well as in the army, had not, nevertheless, by itself a majority in the Assembly ; and a mere majority could not have undertaken so great a

plan as that contemplated. With the aid of the Royalists, however, the execution of this plan was easy. But the Royalists, consisting of two hundred and ninety members, with the Abbé Maury at their head (Cazales, the other leader of the Royalist party, at this time emigrated), retaining their seats in the Assembly, declined to take any part in its proceedings;—and in this manner the only hope of safety for the King was destroyed by the very persons who arrogated to themselves the title of "the King's friends;" nor was this course, though foolish and unpatriotic, altogether unnatural.

What a party can least bear is the triumph of its opponents: the consolidation of a constitutional government was the triumph of that party, which from the beginning of the Revolution had advocated such a government and declared it possible. The triumph of the opposite party, on the contrary, was, that there should be an absolute monarchy, or no monarchy; a government of "*lettres de cachet*," or no government. This party had to prove that to diminish the sovereign's power was to conduct him to the scaffold; that to give the people freedom was to overthrow society. Thus, if they did not hope for the worst, they would do nothing to secure

the best that was practicable. It is conjunctures like these which confound the calculations of those who fancy that men will act according to their interests.

Left to themselves, the Constitutionalists had not sufficient power to give battle to the democrats in the Assembly and the clubs out of it. They voted the King a body-guard and a privy purse — measures better calculated to excite the envy than to curb the license of the populace; and then, betrayed by the same wish to show their disinterestedness, which had made them parties, in November 1789, to the stupid declaration that no member of the National Assembly should be the King's minister, they committed the still greater folly of declaring that no member of the National Assembly should sit in the next legislature, nor hold any office under the Crown during its continuance; a decree decapitating France, and delivering an untried constitution into the hands of inexperienced legislators.

This decree left the future too obscure for any man of calmness and judgment to flatter himself that there was more than a faint probability of fixing its destinies for some years to come; but whatever these destinies might be, the reputation

of the statesman whose views formed the mind of a rising generation, would survive the errors and passions of a past one.

It was with this thought before him that M. de Talleyrand, just previous to the dissolution of the National Assembly or Constituante, brought under its notice a vast project of education, then too late to be decided upon, but which, printed and recommended to the attention of the coming legislature, and having at one extremity the communal school and at the other the Institute, exists with but slight alterations at this very day.

The Assembly now separated (on the 13th of September) amidst that usual exhibition of fireworks and fêtes which mark the history of animated and variable people, who, never contented and never despairing, exhibit the same joy when they crown their heroes or break their idols.

Such was the end of that great Assembly which passed away rapidly from the face of affairs at the moment, but which left its foot-print on the world for generations that have not yet effaced it.

In this Assembly, M. de Talleyrand was the most conspicuous figure after Mirabeau, as he was hereafter in the Empire the most conspicuous personage after Napoleon; and I have dwelt more on this

portion of his career than I may do upon others, because it is the one least known, and for which he has been least appreciated.

The reputation, however, which he obtained and justly earned in those violent and turbulent times, was not of a violent nor turbulent character. A member of the two famous clubs of the day (Jacobins and Feuillans), he frequented them occasionally, not to take part in their debates, but to be acquainted with and influence those who did. In the National Assembly he had always sided with the most moderate who could hope for power, and who did not abjure the Revolution.

Necker, Mounier, Mirabeau, had successively his support so long as they took an active part in public affairs. In the same manner he acted, when they disappeared, with Barnave and the two Lameths; and even with Lafayette, though he and that personage disliked and despised each other. No personal feeling altered his course; it was never marked by personal prejudices, nor can I say that it was ever illumined by extraordinary eloquence. His influence arose from his proposing great and reasonable measures at appropriate times, in singularly clear and elegant language; and this from the height of a great

social position. He did not pretend to be guided by sentiment nor emotion; neither hatred, nor devotion, nor apprehension, ever seemed to affect his conduct. He avowed that he wished for a constitutional monarchy, and was willing to do all he could to obtain one. But he never said he would sacrifice himself to this idea if it proved impossible to make it successful.

Many have attacked his honour because, being a noble and a churchman, he sided against the two orders he belonged to; but in reality he rather wished to make ancient things live amongst new ideas than to sweep ancient things away. Others have denied his sagacity in promoting a revolution which drove him from affluence and power into poverty and exile. But, in spite of what has been said to the contrary, I by no means believe that the end of the Revolution of 1789 was the natural consequence of its commencement. The more we examine the history of that period, the more we are struck by the incessant and unaccountable follies of those who wished to arrest it. There was no want of occasions when the most ordinary courage and good sense on the part of the King and his friends would have given the one all the power it was advisable he should exercise, and

preserved the other in as influential a position as was compatible with the abolition of intolerable abuses. No man can calculate with accuracy on all the faults that may be committed by his opponents. It is probable that M. de Talleyrand did not calculate on the utter subversion of the society he undertook to reform; but it appears that at each crisis he foresaw the dangers that were approaching, and counselled the measures most likely to prevent their marring his country's prospects and his own fortunes.

At the actual moment, he perceived that the new legislature would be a new world, which could neither have the same notions, nor belong to the same society, nor be subject to the same influences, as the last; and that the wisest thing to do was to withdraw himself from the Paris horizon until the clouds that obscured it had, in some direction or other, passed away.

In England, he was sufficiently near not to be forgotten, and sufficiently distant not to be compromised. England, moreover, was the natural field of observation at that moment for a French statesman. To England, therefore, he went, accompanied by M. de Biron, and arrived in London on the 25th of January, 1792.

TALLEYRAND,

THE POLITIC MAN.

PART III.

M. de Talleyrand in London.—Manner and appearance.—Witticisms. —Visit to England.—Lord Grenville refuses to discuss business with him.—Goes to Paris; returns with letter from King.—State of affairs in France prevents success of any mission in England.—Arrives in Paris just prior to the 10th of August.—Escapes, and returns to England, the 16th of September, 1792.—Writes to Lord Grenville, declaring he has no mission.—Sent away the 28th of January, 1799.—Goes to America. —Waits until the death of Robespierre.—Gets then permission to return to France.—Chénier declares that he was employed by Provisional Government in 1792, when he had told Lord Grenville he was not.—Successful reception.—Description of Directory and of society at that time.—Chosen Secretary of Institute, and read two remarkable memoirs to it.—Named Minister of Foreign Affairs.—Sides with Barras and Executive against the Assemblies.—Negotiations at Lille broken off.—Address to diplomatic agents.—Peace of Campo Formio.— Bonaparte goes to Egypt.—Democrats triumph in the Directory.— M. de Talleyrand quits office, and publishes an answer to accusations made against him.—Paris tired with the Directory.—Bonaparte returns from Egypt.—Talleyrand unites with Sieyès to overturn the Government, and place power in Bonaparte's hands.

PART III.

FROM CLOSE OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO CONSULATE.

I.

WHEN M. de Talleyrand made his first appearance in our country, many persons in it still continued favourable to the French Revolution, and viewed with esteem those who had rather sought to destroy crying abuses than to put fantastical theories into practice. Thus, although naturally preceded by the calumnies which were certain to be circulated about a man who had played so remarkable a part on so eventful a scene as that which he had just quitted, the ex-Bishop of Autun was, on the whole, well received by a large portion of our aristocracy, and became particularly intimate at Lansdowne House. The father of the late marquis mentioned to me that he remembered him dining there frequently, and being particularly silent and particularly pale. A contemporary, indeed, describes M. de Talleyrand at this time as

aiming to impose on the world by an air of extreme reserve :—

"His manner was cold, he spoke little, his countenance, which in early youth had been distinguished for its grace and delicacy, had become somewhat puffed and rounded, and to a certain degree effeminate, being in singular contrast with a deep and serious voice which no one expected to accompany such a physiognomy. Rather avoiding than making advances, neither indiscreet, nor gay, nor familiar, but sententious, formal, and scrutinizing,—the English hardly knew what to make of a Frenchman who so little represented the national character.

"But this exterior was a mask, which he threw off in the circles in which he was at his ease, talking in these freely, taking the greatest pains to please, and being remarkable for the choice of his expressions and a certain epigrammatic wit, which had a singular charm for those who were accustomed to his society. His was, the saying cited by Chamfort, *à propos* of Rulhières,* who—on observing that he did not know why he was called ill-

* M. de Rulhières, l'ancien secrétaire du baron de Bretueil à St. Pétersbourg, le confident du maréchal de Richelieu, le poëte de la duchesse d'Egmont, narrateur fort redouté de Catherine II., &c. &c.

natured, for in all his life he had never done but one ill-natured action—was replied to by M. de Talleyrand's drily observing, '*Et quand finira-t-elle?*' —'when will it end?'

"One evening, playing at long whist, the conversation turned on an old lady who had married her footman; some people expressed their surprise, when M. de Talleyrand, counting his points, drawled out in a slow voice, '*At nine, one does not count honours.*'

"Another time," says the person from whom I am quoting, "we were speaking of the infamy of a colleague, when I burst out by exclaiming, 'That man is capable of assassinating any one!' '*Assassinating, no!*' said M. de Talleyrand, coolly; '*poisoning, yes!*'

"His manner of narrating was full of grace; he was a model of good taste in conversation. Indolent, voluptuous, born for wealth and grandeur, he accustomed himself in exile to a life simple and full of privations, sharing with his friends the produce of his magnificent library, which he sold very ill, the spirit of party preventing many from becoming purchasers."

This description, from Dumont (pp. 361, 362), is interesting as a personal sketch at one of the

most critical periods of M. de Talleyrand's life; that is, at the commencement of his career as a diplomatist; for the voyage to England which he was now making, first suggested to Louis XVI. by M. de Montmorin, and subsequently realized by the minister who succeeded him, was (though this could not be officially avowed on account of the self-denying ordinance of the National Assembly) of an official character; a fact suspected if not known at the time. Lord Gower, indeed (our ambassador at Paris), speaks of it in January as a *mission* of peace. Lord Grenville, in a communication to Lord Gower, in February, says M. de Talleyrand had brought him a letter from M. Delessart, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, and in March again he thus writes:*

"I have seen Monsieur de Talleyrand twice since his arrival on the business of his *mission* to this country.

"The first time he explained to me very much at large the disposition of the French government and nation to enter into the closest connection with Great Britain, and proposed that this should be done by a mutual guarantee, or in such other manner as the government of this country should

* March 9. Lord Grenville to Lord Gower.

propose. Having stated this, he earnestly requested that he might not receive any answer at the time, but that he might see me again for that purpose. I told him that, in compliance with his request, I would see him again for the object he wished, though I thought it fair to apprise him that, in all probability, my answer would be confined to the absolute impossibility of entering into any kind of discussion or negotiation on points of so delicate a nature with a person having no official authority to treat upon them. When I did see him again I repeated this to him, telling him it was the only answer I could give to any proposal that he might make to me, although I had no difficulty in saying to him individually, as I had to every Frenchman with whom I had conversed on the present state of France, that it was very far from being the disposition of H. M. Government to foment or prolong any disturbances there with a view of any profit to be derived from them to this country."

The coyness of Lord Grenville to enter into political discussions at this moment with M. de Talleyrand might arise in some degree from the position of the French ministry, for though M. de Talleyrand had brought a letter, as has been said, from M. Delessart, who belonged to the more

moderate section of the French ministry, his intimate friend in it was the Comte de Narbonne; named, just previous to M. de Talleyrand's departure, minister of war, and who, being the youngest and most ardent member of the government, was all for an immediate war with Austria, as the only means of saving France from the internal agitation that was preying on her, and the only means of definitively separating the King from the French *émigrés* and the court of Vienna, whose counsels rendered it impossible to count on his conduct.

M. de Talleyrand shared these ideas. Narbonne's colleagues, however, soon began to think the young soldier's views, to which they had at one time half assented, were too adventurous; and M. de Talleyrand's position becoming more and more difficult, was, after Lord Grenville's conversation in March, impossible. He returned, therefore, to Paris, and on arriving at its gates, learnt that M. de Narbonne was out of office.

But the moderate Constitutionalists who thought of governing without M. de Narbonne had not been employed till their party had lost its influence, and were unable to stem the opposition to which the removal of their popular colleague had given a

new impulse. They soon, therefore, gave way to the celebrated Gironde, a band which, though rigid in its own principles of conduct, was not indisposed to profit by the assistance of able men less scrupulous; and General Dumouriez, a clever and bold adventurer, became minister of foreign affairs. He had precisely the same views as Narbonne with respect to a war with Austria, and thought, that it was of the utmost importance to make sure of the neutrality of England.

M. de Talleyrand had, as we learn from Lord Gower, the address to speak satisfactorily of the sentiments of the British Government after returning from his late expedition, and to attribute whatever was unfriendly in its language to the irregularity of the character he had appeared in. He was again chosen, then, as the French negotiator; and though, as in the former instance, he could not be named ambassador, everything that the law permitted was done to give weight to his character;—Louis XVI. giving him a letter to George III. expressive of his confidence in the bearer. In the meantime, M. de Chauvelin, a gentleman of fashion, professing popular principles, but who would never have been placed in so important a post had not M. de Talleyrand

been his counsellor, was named minister plenipotentiary.

M. Dumouriez announces this double appointment to Lord Grenville on the 21st of April, that is, the day after the declaration of war with Austria, saying—

"That M. de Talleyrand, in his recent voyage to London, had stated to Lord Grenville the desire of the French government to contract the most intimate relations with Great Britain. That it was particularly desirable at that moment, when France was on the eve of a war that she had not been able to avoid, to assure herself of the friendship of that government which could most aid in bringing about a peace; that for this object M. de Chauvelin had been named minister plenipotentiary, a gentleman chosen on account of the knowledge which his Majesty had of his person, sentiments, and talents; and that to him had been adjoined, in consequence of the extreme importance of the negotiation, M. de Talleyrand (whose abilities were well known to Lord Grenville), and M. de Roveray,* formerly *procureur-général* in Geneva — a gentleman known in Switzerland as well as in France; and the King

* He acted as secretary to the mission.

hoped that the efforts of three persons, understanding the situation of France, and enjoying great confidence with the French people, would not be without result."

This letter was dated, as we have said, on the 21st April, but the embassy did not reach its destination till the month of May: M. de Chauvelin having been at first displeased with the adjunction of M. de Talleyrand, and not indisposed to prolong his dissatisfaction, had not the minister, fatigued with quarrels about trifles at so critical a moment, terminated them by saying, "M. de Talleyrand s'amuse, M. de Chauvelin fronde, M. de Roveray marchande:* if these gentlemen are not off by to-morrow night they will be superseded."

The story (told by Dumont) is worth notice, as showing the careless indolence which the *ci-devant* bishop often affected in the affairs which he had most at heart—an indolence which he afterwards justified by the well known maxim, "Point de zèle, Monsieur!"†

* M. de Talleyrand amuses himself; M. de Clauvelin and M. de Roveray bargain.

† No zeal, sir.

II.

It was not for want of zeal, however, that this second mission, notwithstanding the King's letter, was even more unsuccessful than the first; but for another very good reason: viz., that whatever MM. de Chauvelin or Talleyrand might say and do in London, the turn which affairs were taking more and more decidedly at Paris was such as could not but destroy the credit of any agent of the French government.

The Legislative Assembly had been especially framed to place power in the hands of the middle classes, and was intended to be alike hostile to the nobles and the mob.

But the middle class, the most weighty auxiliary that a government can have, is rarely found capable of directing a government. Vergniaud and Roland, who were on this occasion its organs, lost week by week their prestige; the rabble, which forced the palace on the 20th of June, began day by day to be more convinced of its power. What authority remained to the representative of a sovereign whose habitation was not secure and whose person was insulted?

Amidst such events the Revolution lost in England most of its early patrons. Fox, Sheridan, and a few of their particular clique, formed the sole associates of the French embassy; and Dumont, whom I again quote as a trustworthy witness, describes a scene at Ranelagh which testifies the general unpopularity in England of every Frenchman having an official position.

"At our arrival we perceived a buzzing sound of voices saying, 'Here comes the French embassy!' Regards, evincing curiosity but not amity, were directed at once towards our battalion, for we were eight or ten, and we soon ascertained that we should not want space for our promenade, every one retreated to the right and left at our approach as if they were afraid that there was contagion in our very atmosphere."

M. de Talleyrand, seeing that all attempt to negotiate under such circumstances was vain, returned to Paris just previous to the 10th August, and was there when the wavering and unfortunate Louis XVI. lost his crown by a combination between the Girondins and the Jacobins: the first wishing to have the appearance of a victory, the latter aiming at the reality. M. de Talleyrand had been the object of attack when the united Repub-

licans were mustering their forces for the combat, and he felt himself by no means secure after their triumph. The popular movement had now in truth swept over all the ideas and all the individuals it had commenced with; its next excesses were likely to be still more terrible than the last, and the wary diplomatist thought that the best thing he could do was to get back to England as soon as possible.

III.

He got his passport from Danton, then in the provisional government, and whom he knew as an early partisan of the Duc d'Orléans; and he used, when last in London, to tell a story as to the manner in which he obtained it by a timely smile at a joke, which the jocular and truculent tribune had just passed on another petitioner. But I shall have presently to allude further to this passport. The bearer of it but just escaped in time.

Among the papers found in the famous iron cupboard, discovered at the Tuileries, was the following letter from M. de Laporte, the intendant of the King's household, to whom I have already alluded as having communicated the wishes of

the King as to M. de Talleyrand's first mission, and dated the 22nd of April, 1791 :

"SIRE,

"J'adresse à Votre Majesté une lettre écrite avant-hier, et que je n'ai reçue qu'hier après-midi ; elle est de l'évêque d'Autun qui paraît désirer servir Votre Majesté. Il m'a fait dire qu'elle pouvait faire l'essai de son zèle, et de son crédit, et lui désigner les points où elle désirait l'employer."*

The original communication, however, here alluded to, was not discovered : and M. de Talleyrand himself boldly denied that it had ever been written. It is possible that he knew it was destroyed (it is said that he purchased it from Danton), but at all events, various concomitant circumstances seemed to prove that he had been more in the interest and confidence of the Court than he could now safely avow; and the Convention issuing and maintaining a decree of

* "SIRE,—I address to your Majesty a letter written the day before yesterday, and which I only received yesterday after mid-day. It is from the Bishop of Autun, who seems desirous to serve your Majesty. He had it conveyed to me that the King might make a trial of his zeal and influence, and indicate to him the points on which he could be employed."

accusation against him, he was unable to return to France (on the 8th April, 1793), and was consequently comprised in the general list of *émigrés* and forced to remain in England.

The first thing he had done on arriving there was to address the following letter to Lord Grenville :—

"18th September, Kensington Square.*

"My Lord,

"I have the honour of informing you that I arrived in England two days ago. The relations which I had the advantage of having with you, during my stay in London, make this a duty to me.

"I should reproach myself for not promptly performing it, and for not offering my first homage to the minister whose mind has shown itself on a level with the great events of the present times, and who has always manifested views so pure, and a love of liberty so enlightened.

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* "18 septembre, Kensington Square.

"My Lord,

"J'ai l'honneur de vous informer que je suis arrivé en Angleterre il y a deux jours. Les rapports que j'ai eu l'avantage d'avoir avec vous pendant mon séjour à Londres m'en font un devoir.

"Je me reprocherais de ne pas m'en acquitter promptement et de ne pas offrir mes premiers hommages au ministre dont l'esprit m'a paru au niveau des grands événements de cette époque, et qui a toujours manifesté des vues si pures, et un amour éclairé de la vraie liberté.

"On my first voyages, the King had intrusted me with a mission to which I attached the greatest price. I wished to hasten the moment of the prosperity of France, and consequently connect her, if possible, with England.

"I hardly, indeed, dared to hope for such a blessing in our circumstances, but I could not resolve not to make exertions for attaining it.

"The assurance you vouchsafed to give us of the neutrality of your government at the epoch of the war, appeared to me most auspicious.

"Since that moment, everything has cruelly changed amongst us; and although nothing can ever unrivet my heart or my wishes from France, and though I live in the hope of returning thither as soon as the laws shall have resumed their reign, I must tell you, my Lord, and I am desirous that

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"A mes premiers voyages j'étais chargé par le roi d'une mission à laquelle j'attachais le plus grand prix. Je voulais hâter le moment de la prospérité de la France, et par conséquent l'attacher, s'il était possible, à l'Angleterre.

"J'osais à peine, il est vrai, espérer tant de bonheur dans nos circonstances, mais je ne pouvais me résoudre à ne pas faire des efforts pour y parvenir.

"L'assurance que vous daignâtes nous donner de la neutralité de votre gouvernement à l'époque de la guerre me parut un présage très-heureux.

"Depuis ce moment tout est cruellement changé parmi nous, et quoique rien ne puisse jamais détacher mon cœur ni mes vœux de la France, et que mon espoir soit d'y retourner aussitôt que les lois y auront repris

you should know, that I have at this time *absolutely no kind of mission in England*, that I have come here solely for the purpose of seeking repose, and the enjoyment of liberty in the midst of its true friends.

"If, however, my Lord Grenville should wish to know what France is at this moment, what are the different parties that disturb her, and what is the new provisional executive power, and lastly, what is permitted to conjecture of the terrible and frightful events of which I have almost been an eye-witness, I shall be happy to give such information, and to avail myself of the occasion to renew the expression of the respectful sentiments with which I am, my Lord, your most humble and obedient servant,

"TALLEYRAND-PÉRIGORD."

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leur empire, je dois vous dire, mylord, et je tiens beaucoup à ce que vous sachiez que je n'ai absolument aucune espèce de mission en Angleterre, que j'y suis venu uniquement pour y chercher la paix et pour y jouir de la liberté au milieu de ses véritables amis.

"Si pourtant mylord Grenville désirait connaître ce que c'est que la France en ce moment, quels sont les différents partis qui l'agitent, et quel est le nouveau pouvoir exécutif provisoire, et enfin ce qu'il est permis de conjecturer des terribles et épouvantables événements dont j'ai été presque le témoin oculaire, je serais charmé de le lui apprendre et de trouver cette occasion de lui renouveler l'assurance des sentiments de respect avec lesquels je suis, mylord, votre très-humble et très-obéissant serviteur.

"TALLEYRAND-PÉRIGORD."

There is no trace of Lord Grenville's having taken any notice of this communication.

Nothing, however, was done for some time to disturb the fugitive's residence amongst us.

M. de Chauvelin was sent away by the British government after the execution of Louis XVI. on the 24th of January, 1793, and it was not till the 28th of January, 1794, that M. de Talleyrand received an order, under the powers conferred by the Alien Bill, to quit England. He wrote a letter, dated 30th, to Lord Grenville, in which he begs to be allowed to justify himself from any false accusation, declares that if his thoughts have been often turned to France, it has only been to deplore its disasters, repeats that he has no correspondence with the French government, represents the calamitous condition he should be reduced to if driven from our shores, and finally appeals to the British minister's humanity as well as justice.

IV.

M. DE TALLEYRAND'S DECLARATION.*

"My respect for the King's Council, and my confidence in its justice, induce me to lay before it a personal declaration more detailed than that which, as a stranger, I am bound to lay before the magistrate.

"I came to London towards the end of January, 1792, instructed by the French government with a mission to the government of England. The object of this mission, at a moment when all Europe seemed to declare itself against France, was to induce the government of England not to renounce the sentiments of friendship and good neighbourhood which it had constantly shown

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* "*Déclaration de Monsieur de Talleyrand.*"

"Mon respect pour le conseil du roi, et ma confiance en sa justice m'engagent à lui présenter une déclaration personnelle plus détaillée que celle que je vois comme étranger présenter au magistrat.

"Je suis venu à Londres vers la fins de janvier 1792, chargé par le gouvernement français d'une mission auprès du gouvernement d'Angleterre. Cette mission avait pour objet, dans un moment où toute l'Europe paraissait se déclarer contre la France, d'engager le gouvernement d'Angleterre de ne point renoncer aux sentiments d'amitié et de on voisinage qu'il avait montré constamment en faveur de la France

towards France during the course of the Revolution. The King, especially, whose most ardent wishes were the preservation of a peace which seemed to him as useful to Europe in general as to France particularly, attached great value to the neutrality, and to the friendship of England, and he had instructed M. de Montmorin, who preserved his confidence, and M. de Laporte, to acquaint me with his wishes on this subject. I was, moreover, instructed by the King's ministers to make to the government of England proposals referring to the commercial interests of both nations. The constitution had not allowed the King, while entrusting me with his commands, to invest me with a public capacity. This want of an official title was opposed to me by my Lord Grenville, as an obstacle to any political conference. I demanded, in

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pendant le cours de la Révolution. Le roi surtout, dont le vœux le plus ardent était le maintien d'une paix qui lui paraissait aussi utile à l'Europe en général qu'à la France en particulier, le roi attachait un grand prix à la neutralité et à l'amitié de l'Angleterre, et il avait chargé Monsieur de Montmorin qui conservait sa confiance, et Monsieur de Laporte, de me témoigner son désir à ce sujet. J'étais chargé de plus par les ministres du roi de faire au gouvernement d'Angleterre des propositions relatives à l'intérêt commercial des deux nations. La constitution n'avait pas permis au roi en me chargeant de ses ordres, de me revêtir d'un caractère public. Ce défaut de titre officiel me fut opposé par mylord Grenville comme un obstacle à toute conférence politique.

consequence, my recall, and I returned to France. A minister plenipotentiary was sent some time after; the King commanded me to assist in the negotiations, and informed his Britannic Majesty of this by a private letter. I remained attached to the duty the King had imposed upon me until the epoch of the 10th of August, 1792. At that time I was in Paris, where I had been called by the minister of foreign affairs. After having been for more than a month without being able to obtain a passport, and having remained exposed during all this time, both as an administrator of the department of Paris, and as a member of the Constituent Assembly, to all the dangers which can threaten life and liberty, I was at length able to leave the French capital about the middle of September, and I have reached England to enjoy peace

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Je demandai en conséquence mon rappel à Monsieur de Laporte, et je retournai en France. Un ministre plénipotentiaire fut envoyé quelque temps après; le roi me chargea d'en seconder les travaux, et en fit part à S. M. Britannique par une lettre particulière. Je suis resté attaché au devoir que le roi m'avait imposé jusqu'à l'époque du 10 août, 1792. J'étais alors à Paris où j'avais été appelé par le ministre des affaires étrangères. Après avoir été plus d'un mois sans pouvoir obtenir de passeport et être resté exposé pendant tout ce temps, et comme administrateur du département de Paris, et comme membre de l'Assemblée Constituante à tous les dangers qui peuvent menacer la vie et la liberté, j'ai pu enfin sortir de Paris vers le milieu de septembre, et je suis venu

and personal safety under the shelter of a constitution protecting liberty and property. There I have been living, as I always have done, a stranger to all discussions and all interests of party, and having nothing to fear before just men from the publicity of any of my political opinions, or from the knowledge of any of my actions. Besides the motives of safety and liberty which brought me back to England, there existed another reason, doubtless a very legitimate one, which was some personal business, and the early sale of a rather considerable library which I possessed in Paris, and which I had brought over to London.

"I must add, that having become in some measure a stranger to France, where I have maintained no other relations than those of my personal affairs, and of an ancient friendship, I cannot approach

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en Angleterre jouir de la paix et de la sûreté personnelle à l'abri d'une constitution protectrice de la liberté et de la propriété. J'y existe, comme je l'ai toujours été, étranger à toutes les discussions et à tous les intérêts de parti ; et n'ayant pas plus à redouter devant les hommes justes la publicité d'une seule de mes opinions politiques que la connaissance d'une seule de mes actions. Outre les motifs de sûreté et de liberté qui m'ont ramené en Angleterre, il est une autre raison, très-légitime sans doute, c'est la suite de quelques affaires personnelles et la vente prochaine d'une bibliothèque assez considérable que j'avais à Paris, et que j'ai transportée à Londres.

"Je dois ajoutir que devenu en quelque sorte étranger à la France,

my own country save by those ardent wishes which I form for the revival of its liberty and of its happiness.

"I thought that in circumstances where ill-will could have availed itself of various preventions to turn them to the profit of the enmities due to the first periods of our revolution, that it was carrying out the views of the King's Council, to offer him in a precise declaration an *exposé* of the motives for my stay in England, and an assured and irrevocable guarantee of my respect for the constitution and the laws.

"TALLEYRAND.

"January 1, 1793."

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où je n'ai conservé d'autres rapports que ceux de mes affaires personnelles, et d'une ancienne amitié je ne puis me rapprocher de ma patrie que par les vœux ardents que je fais pour le rétablissement de sa liberté et de son bonheur.

"J'ai cru que dans des circonstances où la malveillance pouvait se servir de quelques préventions pour les faire tourner au profit d'inimitiés dues aux premières époques de notre Révolution, c'était remplir les vues du conseil du roi que de lui offrir dans une déclaration précise un exposé des motifs de mon séjour en Angleterre, et un garant assuré et irrévocable de mon respect pour la constitution et pour les lois.

"TALLEYRAND.

"1er janvier, 1793."

V.

Nothing can be more clear and precise than this declaration, but it was ineffectual, and its writer now sailed for the United States, carrying with him letters of recommendation from different members of the Opposition, and, amongst others, from the Marquis of Lansdowne, with whose intimacy, as I have said, he had been especially honoured. Washington replied:

"30th August, 1794.

"My Lord;

"I had the pleasure to receive the introduction from your Lordship delivered to me by M. de Talleyrand-Périgord. I regret very much that considerations of a political nature, and which you will easily understand, have not permitted me as yet to testify all the esteem I entertain for his personal character and your recommendation.

"I hear that the general reception he has met with is such as to console him, as far as the state of our society will permit, for what he abandoned on quitting Europe. Time will naturally be favourable to him wherever he may be, and one must believe that it will elevate a man of his talents and

merit above the transitory disadvantages which result from differences as to politics in revolutionary times.

"WASHINGTON."

VI.

It will be seen from the foregoing communication that M. de Talleyrand was spoken of with some respect, and that his reception in the United States had been rather flattering than otherwise. But the French name generally had lost its popularity; for Lafayette was an exile in the prisons of Olmütz, and the blood-thirsty violence of the Convention and the intrigues of its agents were in nowise congenial with American feelings. The moment, however, was one of considerable excitement; the able men who had hitherto formed round their venerable president a united government were splitting up into opposing parties; the treaty with England was under dispute; and M. de Talleyrand, intimate with Jefferson, was active, it is said, in adding to the prevailing agitation, and endeavouring to thwart the policy of the government which had lately banished him from its shores. His endeavours, however, were unsuccessful; and becoming heartily

wearied with his new place of exile, he employed what capital he had been able to save from his varied career in fitting out a ship, in which, accompanied by M. de Beaumetz, like himself a former member of the National Assembly, he was about to sail for the East Indies.

But during the years that had elapsed since his quitting Paris, events which had been rushing on with a demoniacal rapidity through almost every horror and every crime (each phase in this terrible history being marked by the murder of one set of assassins and the momentary rule of another), had arrived at a new crisis.

The Gironde, whom I left trembling and triumphant on the 10th of August, had been soon after strangled in the giant grasp of Danton. Danton, too indolent and self-confident to be a match for his more cool and ambitious coadjutor, had bent his lofty head beneath the guillotine, to which he had delivered so many more innocent victims; and, finally, Robespierre himself had just perished by the hands of men whom fear had rendered bold, and experience brought in some degree to reason, inasmuch as that they at last felt the necessity of re-establishing some of those laws by which alone society can be preserved.

M. de Talleyrand on learning these occurrences determined on abandoning his commercial enterprises and striving once more for power and fortune amidst the shifting scenes of public affairs.

And here, as often, Fortune favoured him; for the vessel in which he was about to embark, sailing with his friend, was never afterwards seen or heard of. All his efforts were now bent on returning to his native country, where he had many active in his behalf. Amongst the most influential of these was a remarkable woman, of whose talents we have but a faint idea from her works, which—though bearing witness to an ardent imagination and a powerful intellect—hardly give evidence of that natural and startling eloquence which sparkled in her conversation. The daughter of Necker, of whom I speak, just awakening from the horrors of a nightmare that had absorbed almost every sentiment but fear, was at this period the centre of a circle, in which figured the most captivating women and the ablest men, rushing with a kind of wild joy back to those charms of society which of late years had been banished from all places, except perhaps the prisons, wherein alone, during what has been emphatically called the "Reign of Terror," any records of the national gaiety seem to have been preserved.

Amongst the intimates at Madame de Staël's house was the surviving Chénier (Joseph-Marie), who on the 18th of Fructidor addressed the Convention, after the return of M. de Montesquieu had just been allowed, in the following characteristic terms:

"I have a similar permission to demand for one of the most distinguished members of the Constituent Assembly—M. de Talleyrand-Périgord, the famous Bishop of Autun. Our different ministers of Paris bear witness to his services. I have in my hands a *memoir of which the double exists in the papers of Danton;* the date of this memoir is 25th of November, 1792, and it proves that M. de Talleyrand was actually occupied in the affairs of the Republic when he was proscribed by it. Thus, persecuted by Marat and Robespierre, he was also banished by Pitt from England; but the place of exile that he chose was the country of Franklin, where, in contemplating the imposing spectacle of a free people, he might await the time when France should have judges and not murderers; a Republic, and not anarchy called laws!"

How are we to reconcile this declaration with M. de Talleyrand's solemn protestations to Lord Grenville?

How could M. de Talleyrand have been writing

memoirs to Danton and yet have come over to England, "solely for the purpose of seeking repose?"

That the passport to which we have drawn attention bore out M. Chénier's affirmation *allant à Londres par nos ordres*—"going to London by our orders"—is certain, for M. de Talleyrand afterwards confirmed this fact in a pamphlet which we shall have by and by to notice. But of the memoir we can learn nothing further.

The friends of M. de Talleyrand say that probably it never existed, or that, if it did, it could only be a paper of no importance, and not such a one as the English government would have objected to. They add that the form given to the passport was the only one Danton could have ventured to give without danger from the provisional council; that the English government must have been acquainted with it; and that M. de Talleyrand merely availed himself of it, and pretended that it placed him in the position of a French agent, when this was necessary to procure his return to France or to defend himself against the charge of emigration.

I must leave it to his autobiography to clear up whatever is obscure in this transaction; but

at present it seems to justify the French lady, who, when the conversation once turned on the agreeable qualities of the Abbé de Périgord, acknowledged it would be difficult to refuse him her favours, but that it would be impossible to give him her confidence.'

VII.

At all events, Chénier's pleading was successful. The permission to return was granted; and, accordingly, M. de Talleyrand retraversed the Atlantic, and, having been driven on the English coast by stress of weather, arrived in the month of July, 1795, at Hamburg, then the place of refuge for almost all *émigrés*, especially Orleanists, as well as of Irish malcontents: Madame de Genlis, Madame de Flahaut, Lord Edward Fitz-Gerald, &c.

The condition of Europe may be briefly described at this time by saying that the French arms had been generally successful. Belgium was taken; the expedition under the Duke of York beaten and repulsed; Holland had become an allied and submissive Republic; on most of the towns of the Rhine floated the tricolour flag;

Spain had sued for and obtained peace; Prussia was neutral. The expedition to Quiberon had been a complete failure; and although the French generals, Pichegru and Jourdan, began to experience some reverses, the Directory was powerful enough, both abroad and at home, to justify the support of prudent adherents.

M. de Talleyrand consequently saw no objection to serving it. But before appearing at Paris, he judged it well to stay a short time at Berlin, which, being then the central point of observation, would make his arrival in France more interesting.

After this brief preparation, he appeared in the French capital, and found his name one of the most popular in the drawing-rooms (he never had the popularity of the streets), in that capricious city. The ladies formerly in fashion spoke of his wit and address from memory; those of more recent vogue, from curiosity; the great mass of the Convention were well disposed to have a "*grand seigneur*" in their suite; the "*grands seigneurs*" who still remained in France, to have one of their own body in power; all the political leaders recognised his ability, and were anxious to know to what particular section he would attach himself. Even among the "*savants*" he had a party; for he

had been named, though absent, member of the Institute, which had recently been formed on the basis that he had laid down for it. Above all things, he was well known as a liberal, and undefiled by the bloody orgies of freedom. Under such circumstances, he again appeared on the stage of pleasure and affairs.

VIII.

The first movement of all parties after the death of Robespierre had been, as I have said, against the continuance of the murderous system connected with his name; but it was difficult to combine into any one government or policy the various parties that were triumphant; that is, the violent Democrats, who had risen against their chief;—the more moderate Republicans, who had been rather spectators than actors during the domination of the Convention;—and the Constitutionalists of the National and Legislative Assemblies. The reaction once begun, extended by degrees, until it provoked conflicts between extremes; and it was only after a series of struggles, now against the Jacobins and now against the disguised Royalists, that a sort of middle party formed the Constitution

of year III., which was founded on the principle of universal tolerance; assuring, however, to the Conventionalists a supremacy, by exacting that two-thirds of the new assemblies should be chosen from amongst them. These new assemblies were of two kinds, both elected: the one called "the ancients," a sort of senate which had the power of refusing laws; the second, the Five Hundred, which had the power of initiating laws. The executive was entrusted to a Directory, which, in order to guard against a despot, consisted of five members: Carnot, with whose republican severity M. de Talleyrand had little sympathy; Laréveillère-Lepaux, whose religious reveries he had turned into ridicule by christening the "Théophilantropes" (a sect of deists whom Laréveillère patronised) *Les filoux en troupe*; Letourneur, an engineer officer, who had little or no influence; Rewbell, a lawyer, and a man of character and ability, not ill-disposed to him; and Barras.

This last man, at the time I am speaking of the most powerful member of the Directory, was the sort of person who frequently rises to a greater height in civil commotions than any apparent merit seems to warrant. Clever, without great ability; intriguing, without great address; bold

and resolute on any critical occasions, but incapable of any sustained energy; of gentle birth, though not of any great historical family,—he had acquired his influence by two or three acts of courage and decision; and was forgiven the crime of being a noble, in consideration of the virtue of being a regicide. Having been chosen by his colleagues, as the man best acquainted with and accustomed to the world, to represent the government with society,—he sustained this position by easy manners and a sort of court with which he contrived to surround himself; a court containing all the fragments of the old society that were yet to be found mingled with affairs.

In the south of Europe, and in the east, many such adventurers have risen to great fortunes and retained them. In the north, and (strange to say) especially among the changing and brilliant people of France, more solid qualities, and a more stern and equable character, seem essentially necessary for command. Richelieu, Mazarin, Louis XI., Louis XIV., even Robespierre, differing in everything else, were all remarkable for a kind of resolute, every-day energy, for a spirit of order and system which the voluptuary of the Luxembourg wanted. His drawing-room, however, was a theatre where the

accomplished gentleman of former times was still able to shine, and his prejudices, though he affected democratic principles in order to shield himself from the charge of being born an aristocrat, were all in favour of the ex-noble. To Barras, therefore, M. de Talleyrand attached himself.

IX.

The society of Paris was never more "*piquante*," if I may borrow an expression from the language of the country of which I am speaking, than at this moment. Nobody was rich. Pomp and ceremony were banished; few private houses were open: a great desire for amusement existed; there were no pretensions to rank, for who would have ventured to boast of his birth? There was no drawing into sets or *cliques*, for such would still have been considered as conspiracies. People lived together in public fêtes, in public gardens, at theatres, at subscription-balls, like those of Marbeuf, where the grocer's wife and the monseigneur's danced in the same quadrille; each being simply qualified by the title of "*citoyenne*." The only real distinction was that of manners. An active, artful, popular man of the world, amidst

such a confused assemblage of all orders, bent on being amused, had full play for his social and political qualities. But this was not all; with the taste for gaiety had also returned the taste for letters. Here again, M. de Talleyrand found means to excite attention. I have said that, during his absence from France he had been elected a member of the National Institute, which owed its origin, as I have noticed, to the propositions he had laid before it just previous to its dissolution. He had also been chosen its secretary; and it was in this capacity that he now addressed to the moral and scientific class, to which he belonged, two memoirs: the one on the commercial relations between England and the United States, and the other on colonies generally. There are few writings of this kind that contain so many just ideas in so small a compass. In the first, the author gives a general description of the state of American society, the calm character, the various and peculiar habits, the Saxon laws, and religious feelings of that rising community. He then shows, what was at that time little understood, that the mother country had gained more than she had lost by the separation; and that the wants of Americans connected them with English

interests, while their language, education, history, and laws, gave them feelings, which, if properly cultivated, would be—English.

The memoir on colonisation, however, is even superior to the preceding one, where the author points out—for he even then perceived what has since been gradually taking place—the impossibility of long continuing slave labour or of maintaining those colonies which required it. He foresaw that such colonies existed in the face of sentiments which must, whether rightly or wrongly, in a few years sweep them away. He looked out for other settlements to supply their place; and Egypt and the African coast are the spots to which, with a singular prescience, he directed the attention of his country; whose inhabitants he describes, from their sense of fatigue, from their desire of excitement, and in many instances, from their disappointment and discontent, to be peculiarly in want of new regions of rest, of enterprise and of change.

"The art of putting the right men in the right places" (the phrase is not, I may observe *en passant*, of to-day's invention), he observes profoundly, "is perhaps the first in the science of government; but," he adds, "that the art of find-

ing a satisfactory position for the discontented is the most difficult.

"To present distant scenes to their imaginations, views agreeable to their thoughts and desires, is," he says, "I think one of the solutions of this social problem."*

In three weeks after the reading of this memoir, M. de Talleyrand accepted the office of minister of foreign affairs.

X.

The immediate cause of his being named to replace Charles Delacroix in this post, used to be thus related by himself:—"I had gone to dine at a friend's on the banks of the Seine, with Madame de Staël, Barras, and a small party which frequently met. A young friend of Barras, who was with us, went out to bathe before dinner, and was drowned. The director, tenderly attached to him, was in the greatest affliction. I consoled him (I was used to that sort of thing in early life), and

* "L'art de mettre des hommes à leur place est le premier de la science du gouvernement; mais celui de trouver la place des mécontents est à coup sûr le plus difficile; et présenter à leur imagination des lointains, des perspectives où puissent se prendre leurs pensées et leurs désirs, est, je crois, une des solutions de cette difficulté sociale."

accompanied him in his carriage back to Paris. The ministry of foreign affairs immediately after this became vacant; Barras knew I wanted it, and through his interest, I procured it."

But this was not the sole cause of his selection. The state of affairs was at this time critical; the reaction, produced by the horrors of the democrats, became stronger and stronger under a government of indulgence.

In proportion as the ordinary relations of society recommenced, the feeling against those who had disturbed and for a time destroyed them, became more and more bitter. At last the hatred of the Robespierreans verged towards an inclination for the Royalists; and Pichegru, the president of the Assembly of the Five Hundred, and a general at that time in great repute, was already in correspondence with Louis XVIII.

The Directory itself was divided. Carnot, an impracticable man of genius and a violent Republican, sided with the opposition from personal dislike to his colleagues and from a belief that any new convulsion would end by the triumph of his own principles. He carried with him Barthélemy, the successor to Letourneur, who had lost his place in the Directory by the ballot, which

was periodically to eliminate it. Rewbell and Laréveillère-Lepaux ranged themselves with Barras, who, satisfied with his position and having to keep it against the two extreme parties, was glad to get into the ministry, as attached to him, a man of well-known ability and resolution.

Besides, the negotiation with Great Britain at Lille, which not unnaturally followed the defeat of all her continental allies, suggested the appointment of a more distinguished diplomatist than M. Delacroix, who presided at that time over the department to which M. de Talleyrand was appointed.

The new minister soon justified the choice that had been made of him. His eye took in at once the situation in which Barras found himself,—a situation that singularly resembled one in our own times. The majority of the executive was on one side, and the majority of the legislative bodies on the other.

The question was agitated by the Assembly as to whether it should not take the first step, and, without regard for the constitution, obtain possession by any means of the executive power. General Pichegru hesitated, as did General Changarnier after him.

Talleyrand advised Barras not to hesitate. He did not; and, taking the command of the troops in virtue of his office, seized the chief men amongst his opponents to whatever party they belonged. Carnot, Barthélemy, and Pichegru, were amongst the number, and though Carnot escaped by flight, M. de Talleyrand equally got rid of an enemy, and the ardent Republicans lost a leader.

XI.

The worst effect of this *coup-d'état* was the interruption of the conferences at Lille, which Monsieur Marat was on the point of concluding, which Talleyrand had himself favoured, but which were impossible, except on such conditions as Great Britain could not accept, to a government that had now to seek popularity as a protection to usurpation.

The idea of peace with England being thus abandoned, M. de Talleyrand addressed a circular to his agents which, considering the time at which it was written and the position which its writer held at that moment, is a model of tact and ability.

He describes England as the sole enemy of France. He dates her power and prestige from

the times of Cromwell and the spirit and energy which liberty inspires. He bases the power and prestige which France ought then to hold on that same liberty, and invokes the victories which she had just gained. He describes in a way that suited his purpose the manner in which Great Britain had acquired her influence, and accuses her of having abused it.

He shows to his agents the immense importance of an intelligent diplomacy. He warns them against shocking the habits and ideas of the nations to which they are sent; he tells them to be active without being agitators. He instils into them the conviction of the greatness of France and the necessity of making that greatness acknowledged and sympathised with.

He counsels them to avoid little tricks, and to evince that confidence in the strength and continuance of the Republic, which would inspire such confidence in others.

He points out how all the misfortunes and changes in the government of France had been brought about by the feeble, apathetic, and disgraceful position which she had held abroad during the later princes of the House of Bourbon; and, finally, he assures them of his support, and adds

that he appreciates highly the services which their talents may render to their country.

It is in this manner that great ministers form able agents.

In the meantime the treaty of Campo Formio had established peace in Italy and Germany on conditions advantageous to France, though, by the cession of Venice to Austria, she abdicated the cause for which she had hitherto pretended to fight.

Bonaparte, to whom this peace was due, now visited Paris, and saw much of M. de Talleyrand, who courted him with assiduity, as if foreseeing his approaching destiny. But the time for a closer alliance was not yet arrived: Napoleon, indeed, was not himself prepared for the serious meditation of the design which he subsequently executed. Vague ideas of conquest and greatness floated before his eyes, and the gigantic empires that courage and genius have frequently founded in the East, were probably more familiar with his thoughts than any tyranny to be established in his own country (May, 1798). He set out for Egypt, then, where he thought of realising his splendid dreams, and where the Directory, following a traditional policy not yet abandoned, thought of

striking a desperate blow against the ancient enemy and rival with whom alone she had now to maintain a conflict. With him seemed to depart the fortunes of his country. A new European coalition broke out with the murder of the French plenipotentiaries at Rastadt, and divisions of all kinds manifested themselves in France. The victories of the allies on the Upper Rhine and in Italy increased these divisions, and added to the strength of the democratic party to which the overthrow of Pichegru and his associates had already—contrary to the intention of Barras, who, as I have said, had wished to maintain a middle course—given a certain impulsion. The loss of Rewbell, whose energy the Democrats dreaded and whose seat in the Directory became legitimately vacant, gave strength to their desires, the more especially as Sieyès, who replaced Rewbell, entered the executive with his usual mania of propounding some new constitution.

M. de Talleyrand, attacked as a noble and an *émigré*, resigned his department, and published a defence of his conduct, which is remarkable, and of which I venture to give, in an abbreviated and free translation, some of the most salient points:—

* * * * *

"I am accused of creating the league of kings against our Republic! I! If I have been known for one thing more than another, it has been for my constant desire for an honourable peace; the great result that will alone give solidity to our institutions! So it is I, then, who seek to augment our enemies, exasperate our friends, break our treaties, indispose neutrals, and menace other states with principles they do not wish to accept—and who make this accusation? They who are always stirring up discord, invoking the horrors of war; they, whose aim it is to produce revolutions throughout the world, who address to every power by turn the most injurious, absurd, and impolitic reproaches; who employ the press to circulate the assertion that monarchies and republics are natural enemies; and who left to me the task of calming the governments whom they kept in a state of constant disquietude and alarm.

* * * * *

"It is true that Austria, after the treaty of Campo Formio, though that treaty was favourable to her, began new combinations and alliances against us—and that England and Russia engaged her in their designs. If I had been ignorant of their intrigues or hostile preparations, if I had not informed the

government of them, then, indeed, I might justly be accused. But, not only do I defy any one to show that I ever neglected my duty for a single day, it so happens that five months before the entry of the Russians into Italy, *I procured a copy of the combined plans of Russia and Austria*, and delivered them to General Joubert, who has frequently declared that they were of the utmost utility in his operations.

* * * * *

"But I am a Constitutionalist of 1791 (a title I glory in), and, consequently, I offer no guarantee to the Republic.

"If it were not true that a patriot of 1789, who has not hesitated to take his oath to the Republic, and frequently repeated it, has no favour to expect from a French government that is not republican; —it is certain either that the Republic will establish itself, or that it will perish in a general confusion, or that it will be again submitted to a royalty furious and revengeful. From the Confusionists and the Royalists it appears to me that I have little to expect. Is this no guarantee?

"But—I am an *émigré!* an *émigré!* When the first republican authority—the National Convention —declared with unanimity, at the period of its

greatest independence and its greatest force, that my name should be effaced from the list of *émigrés*, I was sent to London on the 7th of September, 1792, by the executive government. My passport, delivered to me by the provisional council, is signed by its six members, Lebrun, Servan, Danton, Clavière, Roland, Monge. It was in these terms:

"'Laissez passer Ch. Maurice Talleyrand, allant à Londres *par nos ordres*.'

[M. de Talleyrand here repeats what was said by Chénier.]

"Thus I was authorised to quit France, and to remain out of it until the orders I received were revoked, which they never were. But not wishing to prolong my absence, I asked, the instant that the Convention recovered the liberty which had been for a time suppressed, to return to my native land, or to be judged if I had committed any offence that merited exile. My request was granted. I left France then by orders which I received from the confidence of the French government. I re-entered it directly it was possible for me to do so with the consent of the French government. What trace is there here of emigration?

* * * * *

"Well, then, it was I who made Malmesbury, who had been sent about his business by Charles Delacroix, return not, it is true, to Paris—but to Lille, the centre of our military Boulevards."

"What is the truth? On the 13th Prairial, year V., Lord Grenville proposed to enter into negotiation; on the 16th the proposal was accepted; on the 25th Charles Delacroix sent passports to England, and fixed on Lille as the place of negotiation.

"On the 29th Lord Grenville accepts and announces the choice of Lord Malmesbury as the English negotiator. On the 2nd Messidor, the Directory sanctions this arrangement. On the 28th the conferences commence at Lille, and it was not till the 28th I was named minister.

* * * * *

"I am attacked for all the acts of the ex-Directors. My accusers know that, if my opinion differed from theirs, I should not have charged them with errors when they were in place, and still less should I do so now, when they are stripped of power, and that all I desire to remember is their kindness and confidence.

"It is for this reason that in my report to the legislative body I only glanced rapidly over the

fact that all that was to be decided relative to Italy and Switzerland, during my ministry, was decided without my knowledge and concurrence. I could have added that, to the changes operated in the Cisalpine Republic, I was entirely a stranger; that, when the citizen Rivaud was sent to that Republic as ambassador, I was asked for letters of credence in blank, and that I only learnt of his mission after it had been in activity. But my enemies do not pause here.

"Ignorance and hatred seem to dispute as to which should accumulate the most falsehoods and absurdities against my reputation.

"I am reproached for not having invaded Hanover: but if I had advocated carrying the war into that country in spite of the neutral line which protects it, how much more just and more violent would have been the attacks on me for having violated that neutrality, and thereby roused Prussia against us!

"Then it is said I should have assailed Portugal! And if I had done so and been opposed by Spain, and thus lost an alliance so useful to us, what reproaches should I not have encountered!

"But I did not sufficiently encourage letters of mark against England. Five hundred and forty-

five privateers fell into the hands of the English, from the commencement of the war till the year VI. of the Republic. The number of prisoners in England amounts to thirty-five thousand; these cost fifteen millions to support on an enemy's territory, and it is principally owing to letters of mark that we owe this result.

"I will say no more; but surely I have said enough to inspire the most discouraging reflections as to that moral disorganization—as to that aberration of mind, as to that overthrow of all reasonable ideas—as to that want of good faith, of the love of truth, of justice, of esteem for oneself and others—which are the distinguishing characteristics of those publications which it is difficult to leave unanswered, and humiliating to reply to."*

* * * * *

We find, from the above, that the ex-minister did not scruple to make his defence an attack, and to treat with sarcasm and disdain the party by which he had been ejected; but at the same time that he denounces the follies of the over-zealous Republicans, he declares himself unequivocally for a republic: and justifying what he had done,

* (XII.) Eclaircissements donnés par le citoyen Talleyrand à ses concitoyens.

ridiculing what he had been condemned for not doing, he throws with some address the blame of much that had been done against his opinion on those Directors still in power.

What he says as to the negotiations at Lille shows sufficiently the difficulties, after the 18th of Fructidor, of any peace with England; and a passage that I have quoted, and to which I had previously alluded, bears out what had been said by Chénier as to the famous passport.

In these "Eclaircissements," however, the ex-minister aimed more at putting himself in a good position for future events, than at referring to past ones.

He would hardly, indeed, have fixed his signature to so bold a publication if his enemies had been firm in their places; but already the Directory was tottering to its fall.

XII.

The great evil of any constitution, formed for a particular time and not the result of continual adaptation to the wants of various epochs, is that it is altogether of one character and is almost immediately out of date. The constitution of the

Directory, framed after a period of great popular violence and individual despotism, *was framed* upon the principle of so nicely checking every action in the State, that there should be no honest means for any individual gaining great power or distinction. But when the influence of individuals in a government is over-zealously kept down, the influence of government collapses, and becomes unequal to restrain the agitation of a society more ardent and ambitious than itself.

Thus, during four years, the Constitution of the year III. was preserved in name by a series of actual infringements of it. Now, the Directory checked the councils by transporting the opposition; now, the opposition put down the Directory by compelling an unpopular director to resign his office; and now again, the absence of all laws against the license of the press was compensated for by declaring hostile journalists enemies of the State, and punishing a clever article as an insurrection.

Nor was this all: where civil ability can create no great career a civilian can excite no great enthusiasm. The persons in civil employment had their prestige limited by the same contrivances that limited their power; the nation was fatigued with talkers, for talking had no result: a general

alone could strike its imagination, for a general alone was in the situation to do anything remarkable. Each party saw this, the patriots or democrats, represented in the Directory by Laréveillère and Gohier (who had become a Director instead of Treillard); Barras, of no particular opinion, who might be said to represent those generally who were intriguing for place; and Sieyès, the most capable of the executive, at the head of a moderate section, still for maintaining the Republic and establishing order, though under some new form. Sieyès had with him a majority in the Council of Ancients, a powerful minority in the Council of the Five Hundred, and some of the most eminent and capable men in France, amongst whom was M. de Talleyrand.

He sought then a general like the rest, but the choice was not so easy to make. Hoche was no more; Joubert had just perished; Moreau was irresolute; Massena, though crowned by the victory of Zurich, too much of the mere soldier; Augereau, a Jacobin; Bernadotte, unreliable. At this moment (on the 9th October, 1799), Bonaparte landed from Egypt. He broke the quarantine laws, he had deserted his army, but the country felt that he was wanted; and through his progress to Paris,

as well as on his arrival there, he was hailed by acclamations.

His object at this time, if he had any distinct one, was the Directory, for which, however, he wanted a dispensation as to age. But he found that the majority of the Directory would not hear of this dispensation. Something else was to be tried and could only be combined with Barras or Sieyès. Now Barras, Bonaparte hated: for Barras had been his protector, without having been his friend. In regard to Sieyès, M. Thiers has said, not untruly, that two superior Frenchmen, until they have had the opportunity of flattering one another, are natural enemies. Moreover, Bonaparte and Sieyès had met at Gohier's without exchanging a syllable, and had separated, disliking each other more than ever. M. de Talleyrand undertook to reconcile these two men, whose rivalry had to be conquered by their interests,—and he succeeded. But, with Sieyès, a total subversion of the existing state of things was a matter of course, because the only ambition he ever fostered was that of inventing institutions, which he did with a rare intelligence as to the combination of ideas, forgetting that societies have something in them besides ideas.

A revolution therefore was decided upon; it

was to be brought about by the Ancients, of whom Sieyès was sure, declaring that the chambers were in danger at Paris, and should be assembled at St. Cloud; by confiding the safety of these assemblies to the guardianship of Bonaparte; and by effecting the dissolution of the Directory by the resignation of a majority of its members. After this, it was supposed that the majority of the Five Hundred, overawed by a large military force, opposed by the other branch of the Legislature, and having no government to support it, would, in some way or other, be overcome. The first two measures accordingly were taken on the 18th Brumaire, but the third remained. Sieyès and Ducos, who acted together and who resigned, were balanced by Gohier and Moulins, who would not give in their resignation; while Barras had the casting vote; and it was M. de Talleyrand again, who, in conjunction with Admiral Bruix, was charged with the task of coaxing him into his abdication. The result of the interview was, that Barras stepped out of his bath, where he was found, into his carriage, and thus the Directory being no longer in existence, a charge of grenadiers in the Orangery of St. Cloud settled the affair on the day following.

XIII.

In glancing over the narrative of these events, we shall see that, if a similar result could have been otherwise arrived at (which is doubtful), it certainly could not have been arrived at in the same peaceful and easy way, but for the assistance of M. de Talleyrand. The legal part of the recent change was effected by Sieyès, whom he had united with Bonaparte; and accomplished through Barras, whose unwilling abdication he also procured. The time for rewarding these services was come, and when Napoleon became first consul, M. de Talleyrand was made minister of foreign affairs.

In following him through the period which intervened between the 10th of August, 1792, and the 18th Brumaire, we find him a fugitive to England under doubtful auspices, an exile in America dabbling in politics, projecting commercial adventures, and, above all, waiting on events which proved fortunate to him.

Having quitted France as the partisan of a constitutional monarchy, he returns to it when the feverish passions and opinions which had so long

convulsed it were settled down under a republic—too strong to be overturned by Royalists—too weak to promise a long existence.

He takes office under the government which he finds, a government that, compared with its immediate predecessors, offered in a remarkable manner the security of property and life.

He sides, amidst the conflicts which still continue, with those who are for a middle course, between bringing back the Bourbons with all their prejudices, or re-establishing the Robespierreans with all their horrors. In these political struggles he exhibits moderation and resolution: in the department which he fills, he shows tact and capacity. His two memoirs, read before the Institute, are remarkable for the elegance of their style and the comprehensiveness of their views.* Defending himself against the two parties who assailed him—the one for being too much, the other for being too little, of a republican—he uses language which is at once bold, dignified, and moderate, and the only question that can arise is as to whether it was sincere.

Finally, he throws a government—which is at once feeble, profligate, divided, and conscious of

* See *Appendix*.

its own incapacity,—into the hands of a man of great genius, by whom he expected to be rewarded, and who, upon the whole, seemed the one most capable of steadying the course, promoting the prosperity, and elevating the destiny of his country.

TALLEYRAND,

THE POLITIC MAN.

PART IV.

Talleyrand supports the extension of the First Consul's power, based on a principle of toleration and oblivion of the past.—Napoleon attempts peace with England; fails.—Battle of Marengo.—Treaty of Lunéville and peace of Amiens.—Society at Paris during the peace.—Rupture.—M. de Talleyrand supports Consulate for life, Legion of Honour, and Concordat.—Gets permission from the Pope to wear the secular costume and to administer civil affairs.—Marries.—Execution of Duc d'Enghien.—New coalition.—Battle of Austerlitz.—Treaty of Presburg.—Fox comes into power; attempts a peace unsuccessfully.—Prussia declares against France, and is vanquished at Pavia.—Peace of Tilsit.—M. de Talleyrand resigns Ministry of Foreign Affairs.—Differences about policy in Spain.—Talleyrand and Fouché now at the head of a quiet opposition—Russian campaign; idea of employing M. de Talleyrand.—Napoleon's defeats commence.—Offers M. de Talleyrand the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after the battle of Leipsic, but on unacceptable conditions.—In the continued series of disasters that ensue, Talleyrand always advises peace.—Tries to persuade Marie-Louise not to quit Paris.—Doubtful then between a regency with her and the Bourbons.—When, however, her departure suspends the constituted authority, and the Emperor of Russia takes up his residence at the Hôtel Talleyrand, and asks M. de Talleyrand what government should be established, he says that of the Bourbons.—Efforts to obtain a Constitution with the Restoration.—Napoleon arrives at Fontainebleau.—Negotiates, but finally abandons the French throne, and accepts the island of Elba, under the title of Emperor, as a retreat.

PART IV.

FIRST CONSULATE.

I.

ONE of M. de Talleyrand's striking phrases (a phrase I have already quoted) was that the great Revolution "*avait désossé la France*"—"disboned France!" There had ceased, in fact, to be any great principles in that country, holding affairs together, and keeping them in form and order. He said, then, "What principles cannot do, a man must. When society cannot create a government, a government must create society." It was with this idea that he was willing to centre in Napoleon all the power which that wonderful man's commanding genius required. But he wanted, in return, two things: one, that he should himself profit by the power he aided in establishing; the other, that that power should be exercised, on the whole, for the benefit of the French nation. Relying, for the moment, on the fulfil-

ment of these conditions, he delivered himself up to a dictatorship which should quietly and gradually absorb all the used-up opinions and institutions.

Sieyès, who, with a more profound, had a less sagacious intellect, imagined that after he, a man of letters, had handed over the State to a daring, unscrupulous man of the world, he could govern that man. But M. de Talleyrand rather despised and underrated Sieyès, whom he looked on as a tailor who was always making coats that never fitted—a skilful combiner of theories, but without any tact as to their application; and when some one, *à propos* of the new constitution, which Sieyès had undertaken to frame, said, "Après tout ce Sieyès a un esprit *bien profond*," he replied, "Profond! Hem! Vous voulez dire peut-être *creux*."*

Bonaparte's conduct justified this witticism; for when the first project of the constitution alluded to was presented to him, he treated it with ridicule, in the well-known phrase: "A man must have little honour or intellect who would consent to be a pig, put up in a sty to fatten on so many millions a year."

* "After all that Sieyès has a very profound intellect." "Profound! Hem! You mean perhaps—*hollow*."

The hero of the 18th Brumaire was not, in truth, a man who would accept the robes without the reality of power; and having taken out of the plan proposed for his acceptance what suited his views, and discarded the rest, he endowed himself with as much authority as he thought would be tolerated; for though France was wearied with perpetual changes and convulsions, she was not at that time prepared to end them by a new sovereignty.

One of the causes, indeed, which facilitated Napoleon's early steps towards the great object of his ambition, was the general incredulity as to the possibility of his attaining it.

M. de Talleyrand himself did not, in all probability, imagine that he was making a military empire, when he was aiming at concentrating authority in the hands of the chief of the Republic; but he thought that the first care was to steady a community which had so long lost its balance; and on one occasion, shortly after the formation of the new government, and when the part which the first consul was to play was not yet altogether decided, he is said by a contemporary * to have held, at a private interview with the first consul, the following language:—

* Bourrienne.

"Citizen consul, you have entrusted to me the ministry of foreign affairs, and I will justify your confidence; but I think I must declare to you that henceforth I will communicate with you alone. This is no vain presumption on my part. I say that, in the interest of France—in order that it may be well governed, in order that there may be unity of action in its conduct, you must be the first consul; and the first consul must have in his hands all the political part of the government—*i.e.*, the ministry of the interior and of the police, for internal affairs; and my ministry for foreign; and also the two great ministries of execution—the war and the marine. It would be proper that these five departments should communicate with you alone. The administrations of justice and finance are, no doubt, connected with the policy of the State by many ties, but these ties are less inseparable from that policy than the departments I have mentioned. If you will allow me to say so, then, general, I would add that it would be convenient to give to the second consul, a very clever jurisconsult, the department of justice; and to the third consul, also very able as a financier, the direction of the finances. These matters will occupy and amuse them. And you, general, having at your disposal

all the mainsprings of government, will be able to give it that fitting direction for arriving at the noble aim which you have in view—the regeneration of France."*

* "Quand Roger Ducos et Sieyès portaient le titre de consuls, les trois membres de la commission consulaire étaient égaux, si non de fait, du moins en droit. Cambacérès et Lebrun les ayant remplacés, M. de Talleyrand, appelé dans le même moment à succéder à M. Reinhard au ministère des relations extérieures, fut reçu en audience particulière dans le cabinet du premier consul.

"'Citoyen Consul,' lui dit-il, 'vous m'avez confié le ministère des relations extérieures, et je justifierai votre confiance; mais je dois vous déclarer dès à présent que je ne veux travailler qu'avec vous. Il n'y a point là de vaine fierté de ma part; je vous parle seulement dans l'intérêt de la France. Pour qu'elle soit bien gouvernée, pour qu'il y ait unité d'action, il faut que vous soyez le premier consul, et que le premier consul ait dans sa main tout ce qui tient directement à la politique, c'est-à-dire les ministères de l'intérieur et de la police, pour les affaires du dehors; ensuite les deux grands moyens d'exécution, la guerre et la marine. Il serait donc de toute convenance que les ministres de ces cinq départements travaillassent avec vous seul. L'administration de la justice et le bon ordre dans les finances tiennent sans doute à la politique par une foule de liens: mais ces liens sont moins sacrés. Si vous me permettez de le dire, général, j'ajouterai qu'il conviendrait de donner au deuxième consul, très-habile jurisconsulte, la haute main sur la justice, et au troisième consul, également bien versé dans la connaissance des lois financières, la haute main sur les finances. Cela les occupera, les amusera; et vous, général, ayant à votre disposition les parties vitales du gouvernement, vous arriverez au noble but que vous vous proposez—le régénération de la France.'"

"Qui ne reconnaît là le premier germe de l'archichancellerie et de l'architrésorerie de l'empire?" (Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, vol. iii., pp. 324, 325.

II.

The minister of foreign affairs, in advising a willing listener thus to take possession of all important affairs, merely echoed, it must be allowed, a general sentiment; for all the different parties then in presence saw the new dictator through glasses which reflected their own illusions. The Royalists imagined that General Bonaparte would turn out a General Monk; the moderate Republicans, a General Washington! M. de Talleyrand knew that Bonaparte was neither a Monk nor a Washington; and that he would neither hand over the power he had acquired to the exiled dynasty, nor lay it down at the feet of the French people. He was aware, on the contrary, that he would keep it as long as he could keep it; and he wished him to keep it with a system which should have at its head the men of the Revolution, without excluding men of the ancient *régime* who would accept the principles that the Revolution had founded. This was precisely, at that moment, the view of Napoleon himself; and the appointment of Fouché, a regicide, as minister of police, and the permission of the Royalist *émigrés* and the

proscribed priests to return to France, gave the exact expression of the policy that was thenceforth to be pursued.

But none knew better than the first consul that it was necessary, having gained power by war, to show that he wished to consolidate it by peace. He addressed, therefore, his famous letter to George III.,* on the effect of which he counted little, and his minister of foreign affairs less. But it was always something in the eyes of his nation to have evinced his own inclination for an interval of repose, and to have placed himself on a level with kings when he spoke to them as the popular chief of the French people.

The refusal of England to treat was the signal of a new coalition, and the renewal of a general war; at the commencement of which Bonaparte, by a stroke of genius, defeated the Austrians in Italy when they were marching as they conceived without opposition into France.

But although the hopes of the cabinet of Vienna were struck down at the battle of Marengo, it did not yet submit to despair, even when the Emperor Paul, flattered by the attentions of the first consul (who had returned him his prisoners newly clothed),

* See *Napoleon's Letter to King George III. before Marengo.*

had withdrawn from the coalition. The policy of France, under these circumstances, was to create divisions amongst the remaining allies (Austria and England) by opening negotiations with each. This was tried by M. de Talleyrand with the cabinet of Vienna, through the means of the Comte St. Julien, who (sent to settle some particulars relative to the convention which took place after the Italian war) actually signed a treaty which his government disowned; and with that of St. James, through the means of an agent employed in the exchange of prisoners, but whose attempts as a negotiator also failed. The success of Moreau, in Germany, however, at last obtained the treaty of Lunéville; and shortly afterwards M. Otto concluded in London the preliminaries of a similar treaty, which was received with equal joy by the French and English nations.

The skill with which these affairs were conducted was generally acknowledged; but M. de Talleyrand had nevertheless to undergo the mortification of seeing Joseph Bonaparte named the negotiator with Lord Cornwallis instead of himself. He accepted, however, this arrangement with a good grace, for he had this great advantage over most men,—his vanity submitted itself easily to his interest or his

ambition; and seeing the impolicy of a rivalry with the first consul's eldest brother, he saw also that, having already obtained the signature of the preliminaries of a treaty, he should have with the public all the merits of that treaty if it took place, and Joseph Bonaparte all the blame, if any failure in the further negotiations occurred.

In the meantime, the seas were opened at once to France, and the English government, having made this immediate concession, was almost bound to give way in any subsequent discussions; for to have yielded what France most desired in order to obtain peace, and then not to have obtained it, would have been ridiculous. Thus, a definitive treaty was shortly afterwards signed at Amiens, and Paris reopened its gates to the excited curiosity of the English traveller.

III.

During this period M. de Talleyrand's house became necessarily one of the great resorts of foreign visitors. He lived in the Hôtel Galifet, then the official residence of the minister of foreign affairs, a large hotel in the Rue St. Dominique (Faubourg St. Germain), which had been built by

a rich colonist of St. Domingo, who gave no other order to his architect than to erect an hotel with ninety-nine columns—a monument of the skill of the builder, and of the singularity of the proprietor —which yet remains.

The principal *habitués* of the ministry were M. de Montrond, Duc de Laval, M. de Saint-Foix, General Duroc, Colonel Beauharnais, afterwards Prince Eugène, Fox, Erskine, &c., &c.

Some few yet remember the easy nonchalance with which, reclined on his sofa by the side of the fire, the minister of foreign affairs welcomed those whom he wished to make at home, the extreme and formal civility which marked his reception of his colleagues and the senators with whom he was not intimate, and the careless and pleasing familiarity that he used towards the favourite officers of the first consul, and the ladies and diplomatists to whom he was partial.

The enmity which for the last few years had been so violent between the French and English people was beginning to subside amidst their intercourse; but, unhappily for them and for the world, the peace, or rather truce, which they had concluded could only be maintained by acknowledging a galling inferiority to the French ruler, who,

it was evident, regarded our retirement from the contest we had long waged without dishonour as a means for relieving St. Domingo, confirming his dominion over Italy, and invading Switzerland, circumstances which rendered it justifiable for England to retain Malta, even though she had foolishly and inconsiderately engaged to resign it.

I need hardly observe that the conduct of Napoleon throughout the whole of this affair was overbearing; but that of his minister of foreign affairs was the reverse; and I should add that that minister had the credit, just as Lord Whitworth was departing, to have obtained the first consul's permission to propose an arrangement which would have left us Malta for such a compensation as, under all the circumstances, might perhaps have been accepted. But this compromise being haughtily rejected, war somewhat abruptly recommenced.

The respite, however, thus secured, had served Napoleon's purposes, and enabled him, by the popularity it brought, to lay the first stones of the Empire,—in the Legion of Honour, out of which grew the nobility of the Empire;—in the consulship for life, which was a step towards the here-

ditary rank he soon assumed; and in the Concordat, which preluded his coronation by the Pope.

It is not to be presumed that these great innovations, on the principles which had so long been dominant, took place without a struggle. All the ardent republicans combated them as a matter of course, designating the tyrant who proposed them as a second Cæsar, who evoked the patriotism of a second Brutus. But a more serious party also attacked them in the legislative bodies, nor was it without an illegal act of authority that this party was vanquished.

The measures in question were not in fact popular, and the Concordat, at one time, almost menaced an insurrection in the army.

M. de Talleyrand, nevertheless, supported them all warmly; and, with the aid of Cambacérès, softened and conciliated many of their opponents.

"We have," he constantly repeated, "to consolidate a government and reorganize a society. Governments are only consolidated by a continued policy, and it is not only necessary that this policy should be continued,—people should have the conviction that it will be so.

"I look upon the consulship for life as the only means of inspiring this conviction."

So again, he said, with respect to the Legion of Honour and the Concordat, "In reorganizing any human society, you must give it those elements which you find in every human society.

"Where did you ever see one flourish without honours or religion? the present age has created a great many new things, but it has not created a new mankind, and if you mean to legislate practically for men, you must treat men as what they always have been and always are."

For the Concordat he had a peculiar reason to plead; no one gained so much by it: for he now legitimately entered into civil life on the authority of his spiritual master, and by a brief which I here cite:—

"*To our very dear son, Charles Maurice Talleyrand.**

"We were touched with joy at learning your ardent desire to be reconciled with us and the Catholic Church: loosening then on your account the bowels of our fatherly charity, we discharge you by the plenitude of our power from the effect

* "*A notre Très-cher Fils, Charles Maurice Talleyrand.*

"Nous avons été touché de joie quand nous avons appris l'ardent désir que vous avez de vous réconcilier avec nous et avec l'Eglise catholique. Dilatant donc à votre égard les entrailles de notre charité paternelle, nous vous dégageons par la plénitude de notre puissance du

of all excommunications. We impose on you, as the consequence of your reconciliation with us and the Church, the distribution of alms, more especially for the poor of the church of Autun, which you formerly governed: we grant you, moreover, the liberty to wear the secular costume and to administer all civil affairs, whether in the office you now fill, or in others to which your government may call you."

This brief, in making M. de Talleyrand a layman, authorized him to take a wife, and he married an American lady—Mrs. Grant—with whom it was supposed he had been previously intimate, and who was as remarkable for being a beauty, as for not being a wit: the often-told story of her asking Sir George Robinson after his man Friday, is a fact pretty well authenticated. But M. de Talleyrand vindicated his choice, saying, "A clever wife often compromises her husband; a stupid one only compromises herself."

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lien de toutes les excommunications. Nous vous imposons par suite de votre reconciliation avec nous et avec l'Eglise, des distributions d'aumônes pour le soulagement surtout des pauvres de l'église d'Autun que vous avez gouvernée. Nous vous accordons le pouvoir de porter l'habit séculier, et de gérer toutes les affaires civiles, soit qu'il vous plaise de demeurer dans la charge que vous exercez maintenant, soit que vous passiez à d'autres auxquelles votre gouvernement pourrait vous appeler."

IV.

It was shortly after the renewal of hostilities that the event occurred which has given rise to the most controversy concerning Napoleon, and to the bitterest attacks on M. de Talleyrand. I speak of the execution of the Duc d'Enghien. Many details attending this transaction are still in dispute; but the broad outline of it is as follows:

The pure Republicans (as they were then called) had, on the one hand, at this period become desperate; on the other hand, the latitude that had for a time been allowed to the Royalists, had given that party courage. The renewal of an European war increased this courage. The power and prestige of the marvellous person at the head of the consular government had made both parties consider that nothing was possible to them as long as he lived.

A variety of attempts had consequently been made against his life. The popular belief—that of Bonaparte himself—was that these attempts proceeded mainly from the *émigrés*, aided by the money of England, a belief which the foolish cor-

respondence of the British minister at Munich, Mr. Drake, with a pretended *émigré* in fact an agent of the French government (Mahée), might unfortunately have encouraged.

George Cadoudal, the daring leader of the Chouans, who had already been implicated in plots of this kind, was known to be in Paris and engaged in some new enterprise, with which Pichegru, certainly — Moreau, apparently — was connected. But in the reports of the police it was also stated that the conspirators awaited the arrival at Paris of a prince of the house of Bourbon.

The Duc d'Enghien, then residing at Ettenheim, in the Duchy of Baden, seemed the most likely of the Bourbon princes to be the one alluded to: and spies were sent to watch his movements.

The reports of such agents are rarely correct in the really important particulars. But they were particularly unfortunate in this instance, for they mistook, owing to the German pronunciation, a Marquis de Thumery, staying with the Bourbon Prince, for Dumouriez: and the presence of that general on the Rhenan frontier, and with a Condé, strongly corroborated all other suspicions.

A council was summoned, composed of the three consuls — Bonaparte, Cambacérès, Lebrun — the

minister of justice and police — Régnier — and Talleyrand, minister of foreign affairs.*

At this council (10th March, 1804) it was discussed whether it would not be advisable to seize the Duc d'Enghien, though out of France, and bring him to Paris; and the result was the immediate expedition of a small force, under Colonel Caulaincourt, which seized the prince on the Baden territory (15th March); M. de Talleyrand, in a letter to the Grand Duke, explaining and justifying the outrage. Having been kept two days at Strasburg, the royal victim was sent from that city, on the 18th, in a post chariot, arrived on the 20th at the gates of Paris at eleven in the morning; was kept there till four in the afternoon; was then conducted by the boulevards to Vincennes, which he reached at nine o'clock in the evening; and was shot at six o'clock on the following morning, having been condemned by a military commission—composed of a general of brigade (General Hullin), six colonels, and two captains—according to a decree of the governor of Paris (Murat) of that day (20th March), which decree (dictated by Napoleon) ordered the unfortunate captive to be tried on the charge of

* Fouché, not then in office, was also consulted.

having borne arms against the Republic: of having been and being in the pay of England, and of having been engaged in plots, conducted by the English in and out of France, against the French government. The concluding order was, that, if found guilty, he should be at once executed.

The whole of this proceeding is atrocious. A prince of the dethroned family is arrested in a neutral state, without a shadow of legality; * he is brought to Paris and tried for his life on accusations which, considering his birth and position, no generous enemy could have considered crimes; he is found guilty without a witness being called, without a proof of the charges against him being adduced, and without a person to defend him being allowed.†

* It is even remarked, that a few days previous, the Duc Dalberg had been informed that there was no jealousy of the *émigrés* at that place.—See *M. de Rovigo*, vol. ii., and *Letter of the Duc Dalberg to M. de Talleyrand*, 13th November, 1823.

† There were two "*procès-verbaux*," or accounts taken of this trial. The one published in the *Moniteur*, which cites the laws in virtue of which the prince was condemned, and the pieces that were brought forward in proof of the accusation. This is evidently an afterthought: there was not time to write it at the spot and on the scene. The other cites nothing but the decree of the 29th Ventôse, and the answers of the prince after a deliberation on which he is ordered to immediate execution; this is genuine. The laws by which he is condemned are left in blank.

This trial takes place at midnight, in a dungeon; and the prisoner is shot, before the break of day, in a ditch!

It is natural enough that all persons connected with such a transaction should have endeavoured to escape from its ignominy. General Hullin has charged Savary (afterwards Duc de Rovigo), who, as commander of the gendarmerie, was present at the execution, with having hurried the trial, and prevented an appeal to Napoleon, which the condemned prince demanded. The Duc de Rovigo denies with much plausibility these particulars, and indeed, all concern in the affair beyond his mere presence, and the strict fulfilment of the orders he had received; and accuses M. de Talleyrand—against whom it must be observed he had on other accounts a special grudge,—with having led to the prince's seizure by a report read at the Council on the 10th March; with having intercepted a letter written to the first consul by the illustrious captive at Strasburg, and with having hastened and provoked the execution, of which he offers no other proof than that he met Talleyrand, at five o'clock, coming out of Murat's, who was then, as I have said, governor of Paris, and who had just given orders for the formation of the military

commission. It must be observed also, that, for the report of what passed in the council, M. de Rovigo only quotes a conversation which he had some years afterwards with Cambacérès, who was anxious to prove that he himself had opposed the violation of the German territory.

As to the supposed letter written by the Duc d'Enghien, the persons about the Duc declared that he never wrote a letter at Strasburg; and in the prince's diary, which speaks of a letter to the Princesse de Rohan, there is no question of a letter to the first consul. With respect to another letter, written, the Duc de Rovigo seems to suppose, by M. Massias, French minister at Baden, there is no trace of it in the French Archives; whilst the mere fact of M. de Talleyrand having been at Murat's proves nothing (if it be true that he was there) beyond the visit. Indeed, as Murat himself blamed the execution, and did what he could to avert it (see Thiers' *Consulate and Empire*, vol. v. p. 4), there is some probability that, if M. de Talleyrand sought Murat, it was with a view of seeing what could be done to save the prince, and not with the view of destroying him. On the other hand, Bourrienne, who had opportunities of knowing the truth, asserts that M. de

Talleyrand, so far from favouring this murder, warned the Duc d'Enghien, through the Princesse de Rohan, of the danger in which he stood.

The Duc Dalberg, minister of Baden at Paris in 1804, also speaks of M. de Talleyrand as opposed to all that was done in this affair.*

Louis XVIII., to whom M. de Talleyrand wrote when the Duc de Rovigo's statement appeared, ordered that personage to appear no more at his court. Fouché declared the act to be entirely that of the first consul; and lastly, Napoleon himself always maintained that the act was his own, and justified it.

For myself, after weighing all the evidence that has come before me (none of it, I must admit, quite conclusive), my persuasion is that the first consul had determined either to put the prince in his power to death, or to humiliate him by a pardon granted at his request; and it seems to me not improbable that he hesitated, though rather disposed, perhaps, to punish than to spare, till all was over.

For this supposition there is the declaration of

* "Bonaparte seul, mal informé par ce que la police avait de plus vil, et n'écoutant que sa fureur, se porta à cet excès sans consulter. Il fit enlever le prince avec l'intention de le tuer. Il est connu que sous votre ministère vous n'avez cessé de modérer les passions de Bonaparte." —*Letter of Duc Dalberg*, May 13, 1823.

his brother Joseph, who says that a pardon had been promised to Josephine; of Madame de Rémusat, who, playing at chess that evening with Napoleon, states that he was muttering all the night to himself lines from the great French poets in favour of clemency; and, lastly, there is an order given to M. Real, minister of police, who was charged to see the Duc d'Enghien, and to report to Bonaparte the result of the interview, which evidently implied that no execution was intended till the minister's report had reached the terrible disposer of life or death, who might then finally take his resolve.

But the opportunity of coming to a decision, after receiving the report of the minister of police, never occurred. By one of those unforeseen accidents which sometimes frustrate intentions, M. Real, to whose house the written instructions I have been speaking of were carried by Savary himself, had gone to bed with the injunction not to be disturbed, and did not wake till the prince was no more:—so that Napoleon had not the chance of clemency, which he undoubtedly expected, presented to him. At all events, whatever may have been the intentions of this extraordinary man, whose policy was generally guided by calculations

in which human life was considered of small importance, I believe, as far as regards the person I am principally occupied with: first, that M. de Talleyrand did read at the Council on the 10th of March a memoir containing the information that had reached his office, and which he was naturally obliged to report; secondly, that when M. de Cambacérès spoke against the original arrest, M. de Talleyrand remained silent, which may be accounted for either by a wish not to compromise himself, or, as persons well acquainted with Napoleon have assured me, by a knowledge that this was the best way to give efficacity to M. de Cambacérès' arguments; thirdly, that when M. de Talleyrand wrote to the Grand Duke of Baden, excusing the intended violation of his territory, he did endeavour to convey such a warning to the Duc d'Enghien as would prevent his being captured; finally, that when the Duc was brought up to Vincennes he gave no advice (which he thought would be useless) to Bonaparte, but approved of the efforts made by Josephine and Joseph, who were the best mediators in the prince's behalf, and that, being also aware of the instructions sent to M. Real, he did not think the execution probable.

As to taking an active part in this tragedy, such conduct would be in direct opposition with his whole character, and is unsupported by any trustworthy testimony. To have lent himself, however, even in appearance, to so dark a deed, and to have remained an instrument in Napoleon's hands after its committal, evinces a far stronger sense of the benefits attached to office, than of the obloquy attached to injustice.

This, it is said, he did not deny; and, when a friend advised him to resign, is reported to have replied: "If Bonaparte has been guilty, as you say, of a crime, that is no reason why I should be guilty of a folly."

The execution of the Duc d'Enghien took place on the 20th March. On the 7th of April, Pichegru, who had been arrested, was found strangled in his room, as some thought, by the police—as the government declared, by his own hands; George Cadoudal, who had also been captured, suffered on the scaffold; and Moreau, after being brought before a tribunal which condemned him to two years' imprisonment, had this absurd sentence commuted into exile. Bonaparte having thus struck terror into the partisans of the ancient dynasty, and having rid himself of his most

powerful military rival, placed on his head, amidst the servile approbation of the Legislature and the apparent acquiescence of the nation, a crown which was solemnly consecrated by Pius VII. (2nd December, 1804).

V.

The assumption of the imperial title was an epoch in the struggle which had for some time been going on between the two statesmen, who contributed the most, first, to raise the power of Napoleon, and finally to overthrow it. Talleyrand and Fouché are these two statesmen; and they may be taken as the representatives of the classes whose adhesion marked Bonaparte's force, and whose defection marked his decline. The one, a plebeian and conventionalist of the mountain, a democrat and regicide by circumstances, position, and the fury of the time: the other, a great nobleman, an enlightened member of the Constituent Assembly, a liberal, such as the fashion, the theories, and the abuses, of the old *régime* had created him. From the 18th Brumaire they both attached themselves to the first consul's fortunes. Cool, unprejudiced, without hatred, without partialities,

each, notwithstanding, had the feelings of his *caste*; and, in moderating the passion and influencing the views of Napoleon, the one never forgot that he was born in the aristocracy, the other that he was the offspring of the people.

Fouché, then, was for employing the republican forms, and entrusting authority exclusively to what may be called new men. Talleyrand was rather for returning to the fashions of a monarchy, ridiculed, to use his own expression, the "*parvenus*" who had never walked on a "parquet,"* and endeavoured to introduce into the employment of the State the aspirants whose principles were liberal, but whose names were ancient and historical.

The Empire which was the natural consequence of the tendency which Talleyrand had favoured and Fouché opposed, nevertheless united and wanted these two politicians; for while it sanctioned the advantages and titles of the old nobility, it established on a firm and equal basis a new nobility, and brought both to a central point, under the rule of a man of genius.

Fouché, once the Empire decided upon, re-

* The houses of the upper classes had oaken floors, called *parquets*: the houses of the lower classes had brick floors.

nounced all further attempts to limit Napoleon's will, and only sought to regain his favour.

Talleyrand, conceiving that all the hopes of the enlightened men of his youth who had sought to obtain a constitutional monarchy were at that moment visionary, abandoned them for a new order of things, which, while it pressed upon the energy and intellect of the individual Frenchman, gave a concentrated expression to the energy and intellect of the French nation, and made it ready to accept a glorious tyranny without enthusiasm, but without dissatisfaction. Nor was the French nation wholly wrong.

A great deluge had swept just recently over all that previous centuries had established; society was still on a narrow and shaking plank which required widening, strengthening, but above all fixing over the still turbulent and agitated waters. Everything of ancient manners, of those habits of thought, without which no community of men can march long or steadily together, was gone. No received notions on essential subjects anywhere existed; and a nation which has no such notions cannot have that sort of public morality which is, to the position and respectability of a state, what private morality is to the respectability and position

of an individual. The first essential to a community is order, for under order received notions establish themselves. Order combined with liberty is the highest degree of order. But order without liberty is preferable to disorder and license. Now, Napoleon's internal government, with all its faults, was the personification of order, as that of the convention had been of disorder; and what was the consequence? a spirit of freedom grew up amidst the despotism of the latter, as a submission to tyranny had been engendered under the wild violence of the former. The phrase, that Bonaparte "*refaisait le lit des Bourbons*," * was a criticism on his own policy, but it might be an eulogium on that of his followers.

VI.

In the meantime a change of forms and titles at Paris was the sign of a similar change throughout Europe. Republics became kingdoms: the Emperor's family, sovereigns: his marshals and favourites, princes and grand dignitaries of the Empire. Those who had shared the conqueror's fortunes had a share allotted to them in his con-

* "Was re-making the bed of the Bourbons."

quests, and for a moment the theory of the nineteenth century brought back the realities of the middle ages. Yet, and notwithstanding these signs and tokens of ambition, had it not been for the rupture with England and the cruel deed at Vincennes, Napoleon's new dignity, that gave a splendid decoration to his new power and an apparent close to his adventurous career, would probably have induced the continent, without absolutely prostrating itself at his feet, to have acknowledged and submitted to his superiority. But the fortitude with which England had braved his menaces, and the act which had sullied his renown, produced a new coalition, and led to a treaty with Russia, signed with England, on 11th of April, and with Austria, 9th of August, 1805. So formidable a combination served to disturb Bonaparte from the project of an invasion with which he was then threatening our shores. But his star, though somewhat clouded, was still in the ascendant. The battle of Austerlitz sanctioned the title of imperator, as the battle of Marengo had done that of consul.

M. Mignet has given us a curious instance, extracted from the French archives, of the comprehensive views of the minister of foreign affairs

at this period.* Immediately after the victory of Ulm, M. de Talleyrand wrote to Napoleon in something like these terms:

"While your Majesty is gaining the victories which will lead to a glorious peace, I am considering how that peace can best be established. There are four great powers in Europe—France, Russia, England, and Austria. England and France, from their juxtaposition, their spirit, and consequent rivality, may be considered natural enemies; that is to say, no great war will take place in Europe without these powers coming into collision. In such case, Russia cannot cordially be with France as long as she retains her projects over the Ottoman empire, which it would be madness in us to encourage. Austria, on the other hand, is sure to side with England as long as her frontiers join ours, and her natural objects of ambition are the same. A great policy, therefore, would be to deprive Russia of her Turkish dreams, and Austria of the possessions neighbouring to those states which we protect, and which, in fact, are ours. I would take from Austria, then, Suabia, in Southern Germany, the Tyrol, adjoining Swit-

* See *Mémoires sur Talleyrand*, read in the Academy by M. Mignet, May 11, 1839.

zerland; and I would make Venice an independent Republic, and thus a barrier to both parties in Italy. To this plan, however, Austria herself must consent with satisfaction, or it cannot be permanent; and I would obtain that consent by giving her, in exchange for what we take, Wallachia, Moldavia, Bessarabia, and the northern portion of Bulgaria. By this plan, your Majesty will remark, the Germans are for ever shut out of Italy, Austria made the rival of Russia and guardian of the Ottoman empire, and the Russians excluded from Europe, and thus directed upon the kingdoms of Central Asia, where they will naturally come into conflict with the rulers of Hindostan."

"This project," says M. Mignet, "being conceived at a time when nothing was impossible, might, after the battle of Austerlitz, have been accomplished, and would doubtless have given another destiny to Europe, and established the grandeur of France on solid foundations."

Napoleon, however, was not inclined to adopt so great a plan on the suggestion of another; nor, indeed, is it impossible but that the secret instinct of his peculiar genius, which was for war, opposed itself to a permanent system of tranquillity. He advanced, then, in the false policy which ultimately

proved his ruin; neither gaining the affection nor utterly destroying the power of the vanquished: and the cabinet of Vienna, driven from Italy, humbled by the confederation of the Rhine and the elevation of the secondary states in Germany, but neither annihilated, nor conciliated, signed the treaty of Presburg. This treaty, which severed the relations between the Russian and Austrian empires, and a change which now took place in the British councils, afforded another chance of giving to the new empire a peaceful and durable existence.

VII.

Mr. Fox had succeeded to Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Fox was an advocate of peace, and an admirer of the warrior who guided the destinies of France. He was also a personal friend of M. de Talleyrand. The Emperor Alexander shared in some degree Mr. Fox's admiration. The hopes which he had founded on an alliance with Austria were now, moreover, at an end, and no one at that time relied on the shuffling, grasping, and timid policy of Prussia. Both the Russian and English cabinets were willing then to treat. M. d'Oubril was

sent to Paris by the cabinet of St. Petersburg, and negotiations begun through Lord Yarmouth, the late Marquis of Hertford (then a "*détenu*"), between the cabinets of St. James and the Tuileries.

M. de Talleyrand, in these double negotiations, succeeded in getting the Russian negotiator to sign a separate treaty, which, however, the Russian government disavowed; and acquired such an influence over Lord Yarmouth, that the English government deemed it necessary to replace him by Lord Lauderdale, who was empowered to negotiate for the two allied governments. It is but just to observe that M. de Talleyrand, though thwarted by a variety of intrigues, laboured with the utmost assiduity in favour of a peaceful termination of this negotiation; for he already saw, and at this time almost alone saw, that without peace all was yet a problem, and that, to use the words of a contemporary, "a succession of battles was a series of figures, of which the first might be 'A,' and the last 'zero.'" *

The position of Malta and Sicily, both at this time in our hands, the natural reluctance that we felt at resigning them without solid guarantees

* *Mémoires de Rovigo.*

for European tranquillity; and the impossibility of getting such guarantees from the pride and ambition of an aspirant to universal empire, were nevertheless difficulties too great for diplomacy to grapple with; and when Prussia, which had lost the golden opportunity of fighting France with Austria by her side, had become so involved by secret engagements with Russia and by public engagements with France; and so restless in the dishonourable and dangerous position in which she found herself, as to be determined on the desperate experiment of escaping from her intrigues by her arms, another great European struggle commenced.

Throughout the new campaigns to which this new coalition led—campaigns beginning with the victory of Jena and closing with the peace of Tilsit—M. de Talleyrand accompanied his imperial master; and though he could hardly be said to exercise a predominant influence over those events, which a more violent character and a more military genius decided, his calmness and good sense (qualities rarely, if ever, abdicated by him) produced a moderating effect upon the imperious warrior, that tended generally to consolidate his successes. The sort of cool way in which he brought to ground many of this extraordinary

man's flights, testing them by their practical results, is well enough displayed in a reply which he made to Savary, who, after the battle of Friedland, said, "If peace is not signed in a fortnight, Napoleon will cross the Niemen."

"Et à quoi bon," replied M. de Talleyrand, "passer le Niemen?" *

The Niemen, then, partly owing to M. de Talleyrand's counsels, was for this once not passed; and, at last, France pretending to sacrific Turkey, and Russia abandoning England, the two combatants signed a treaty, with the notion that the domination of Europe was for the future to be shared between them.

VIII.

At this period M. de Talleyrand, who had been more struck in the recent war by the temerity than by the triumph of the conqueror, thought that Napoleon's military and his own diplomatic career should cease. Fortune, indeed, had carried both the one and the other to the highest point, which, according to their separate characters and the circumstances of the times, they were likely

* *Mémoires de Rovigo*, vol. iii. p. 116.

to attain. To Napoleon's marvellous successes seemed now to belong a supernatural prestige, which the slightest misfortune was capable of destroying, and which hardly a new victory could augment. So also the reputation of M. de Talleyrand was at its height, and many were disposed to consider him as great a master in the science of politics as his sovereign was in that of war. He had acquired, moreover, immense wealth, as it is said, by extorted gifts from the powers with which he had been treating, and more especially from the small princes of Germany, whom in the general division of their territory he could either save or destroy, and also by successful speculations on the stock exchange:*—means of acquiring riches highly discreditable to his character, but thought lightly of in a country that to every species of immorality is indulgent, and which had recently seen wealth so rudely scrambled for, that the "*Res si possis recte*" had become as much a French as ever it was a Roman proverb. His health, moreover, was broken, and unequal to the constant attendance on the Emperor's person,

* With regard to his habits in this respect, it may not be amiss to refer to the American correspondence: *State Papers and Public Documents of the United States*, vol. iii., pp. 473—479.

which was inseparable from his office; while the elevation of Berthier to the rank of vice-constable established a precedency exceedingly galling to his pride. Under these circumstances, he solicited and obtained permission to retire, and already Prince de Benevent, received the title of "vice-grand electeur," raising him to the rank of one of the great dignitaries of the Empire; a position which it appears—so small are even the greatest of us—he ambitioned.

This change in his situation, however, was by no means as yet what it has sometimes been represented,—a "disgrace." He still retained great influence in the Emperor's councils, was consulted on all matters relative to foreign affairs, and even appointed with M. de Champagny, his successor, to conduct the negotiations with the court of Spain; which, owing to the invasion of Portugal and the quarrels which had already broken out in the family of Charles IV., were beginning to assume a peculiar character.*

It has been said, indeed, on the one side, that M. de Talleyrand was opposed to any interference

* A note written by M. Izquierdo, Spanish ambassador to the Court of France, and dated 24th of March, 1808, is exceedingly curious respecting these particulars.

with Spain; and, on the other, that it was actually he who first counselled Bonaparte's proceedings in that country. It is probable that he did so far compromise himself in this matter as to advise an arrangement which would have given the territory north of the Ebro to France, and yielded Portugal as a compensation to the Spanish monarch. It is not impossible, moreover, that he knew as early as 1805—for Joseph Bonaparte was then told to learn the Spanish language—that Napoleon had vague dreams of replacing the Bourbon by the Bonaparte dynasty in the Peninsula. But when the French armies, without notice, took possession of Burgos and Barcelona; when an insurrection deposed Charles IV., and the Emperor was about to adopt the policy, not of peaceably aggrandizing France and strengthening Spain against Great Britain, but of kidnapping the Spanish princes and obtaining by a sort of trick the Spanish crown, he was resolutely and bitterly opposed to it, saying: "*On s'empare des couronnes, mais on ne les escamote pas*" ("one takes a crown from a sovereign's head, but one does not pick his pocket of it"). "Besides, Spain is a farm which it is better to allow another to cultivate for you, than to cultivate yourself."

Comte de Beugnot, in his memoirs recently published, speaks thus of these transactions :

* "The Prince de Benevent was perfectly acquainted with all that was passing (at Bayonne). He appeared indignant. 'Victories,' he said, 'don't suffice to efface such things as these, because, there is something which it is impossible to describe, that is vile, deceitful, cheating! I can't tell what will happen, but be sure nobody will ever pardon what is now doing.' The Duc Decrès, indeed," M. de Beugnot continues, "has told me more than once that the Emperor had in his presence reproached M. de Talleyrand for having counselled what took place at Bayonne, and that M. de Talleyrand had not sought to excuse himself. This has always astonished me. It is sufficient to have known M. de Talleyrand to be sure that, if he had been favourable to dispos-

* "Le prince était instruit dans le plus grand détail de ce qui s'était passé à Bayonne, et il m'en parut indigné : 'Les victoires,' me disait-il, 'ne suffisent pas pour effacer de pareils traits, parce qu'il y a là je ne sais quoi de vil ; de la tromperie, de la tricherie ! Je ne peux pas dire ce qui en arrivera, mais vous verrez que cela ne lui sera pardonné par personne.' Le duc Decrès m'a plus d'une fois assuré que l'Empereur avait reproché en sa présence à M. de Talleyrand de lui avoir conseillé tout ce qui s'était fait à Bayonne, sans que celui-ci eût cherché à s'en défendre. Cela m'a toujours étonné. D'abord, il suffit de connaître un peu M. de Talleyrand pour être bien sûr que, si au fond il a été d'avis

sessing the princes of the House of Bourbon of the Spanish throne, he would not have resorted to the means that were employed. Besides, when he spoke to me, it was with a sort of passion that he never displayed but on subjects which strongly animated him."

There can be no doubt, indeed, that what took place in Spain was a subject of great difference between M. de Talleyrand and Napoleon. M. de Talleyrand would never afterwards during the reign of Louis XVIII. have publicly affirmed this, surrounded as he was by contemporaries and enemies, if it had not been true. Moreover, the general voice of the time, which is more in such cases to be trusted than any individual testimony, loudly proclaimed it; and as to not answering Napoleon when he was pouring forth in violent and insulting language the accusations which he sometimes levelled at those who displeased him, it is well known that M. de Talleyrand never replied to such attacks but by an impassible face and a dignified silence.

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de déposséder du trône d'Espagne les princes de la maison de Bourbon, il n'a certainement pas indiqué les moyens qu'on a employés. Ensuite, lorsqu'il m'en a parlé, c'était avec une sorte de colère qu'il n'éprouve qu'en présence des événements qui le remuent fortement."

IX.

Nor were the affairs of the Peninsula the only ones on which M. de Talleyrand and the Emperor at this time disagreed. The French troops entered Rome and Spain (for Napoleon was now for despoiling the Pope as a prince, after courting him as a Pontiff) about the same epoch; and the Prince of Benevent was as opposed to one violence as to the other.

It was not, however, out of this affair, or that affair in particular, that the enmity between the emperor and his former minister—an enmity so important in the history of both—took its rise.

M. de Talleyrand, the Empire once established and fortunate, had attached himself to it with a sort of enthusiasm. The poesy of victory, and the eloquence of an exalted imagination, subdued for a time the usual nonchalance and moderation of his character. He entered into all Napoleon's plans for reconstituting an empire of the Francs, and reviving the system of fiefs and feudal dignitaries; by which it is, however true, that the followers and favourites of the conqueror had nothing to lose. "Any other system," he said, "but a mili-

tary one, is in our circumstances at present impossible. I am, then, for making that system splendid, and compensating France for her liberty by her grandeur."

The principality he enjoyed, though it by no means satisfied him, was a link between him and the policy under which he held it. He wished to keep it, and to preserve the man, the fall of whom might take it away from him. But he had a strong instinct for the practical; all governments, according to his theory, might be made good, except an impossible one. A government depending on constant success in difficult undertakings, at home and abroad, was, according to his notions, impossible. This idea, after the Peace of Tilsit, more or less haunted him. It made him, in spite of himself, bitter against his chief—bitter at first, more because he liked him than because he disliked him. He would still have aided to save the Empire, but he was irritated because he thought he saw the Empire drifting into a system which would not admit of its being saved. A sentiment of this kind, however, is as little likely to be pardoned by one who is accustomed to consider that his will must be law, as a sentiment of a more hostile nature.

Napoleon began little by little to hate the man for whom he had felt at one time a predilection, and if he disliked any one, he did that which it is most dangerous to do, and most useless; that is, he wounded his pride without diminishing his importance. It is true that M. de Talleyrand never gave any visible sign of being irritated. But few, whatever the philosophy with which they forgive an injury, pardon an humiliation; and thus, stronger and stronger grew by degrees that mutual dissatisfaction which the one vented at times in furious reproaches, and the other disguised under a studiously respectful indifference.

X.

This carelessness as to the feelings of those whom it would have been wiser not to offend, was one of the most fatal errors of the conqueror, who could not learn to subdue his own passions: but he had become at this time equally indifferent to the hatred and affection of his adherents; and, under the ordinary conviction of persons over-satisfied with themselves, fancied that everything depended on his own merits, and nothing on the merits of his agents. The victory of Wagram, and the

marriage with Marie-Louise, commenced, indeed, a new era in his history. Fouché was dismissed, though not without meriting a reprimand for his intrigues; and Talleyrand fell into unequivocal disgrace, in some degree provoked by his witticisms; whilst round these two men gathered a quiet and observant opposition, descending with the clever adventurer to the lowest classes, and ascending with the dissatisfied noble to the highest.

The scion of the princely house of Périgord was, indeed, from his birth, quite as much as from his position in the Empire, at the head of the discontented of the aristocracy; M. de Talleyrand's house then (the only place, perhaps, open to all persons, where the government of the day was treated without reserve) became a sort of "rendezvous" for a circle which replied to a victory by a *bon mot*, and confronted the borrowed ceremonies of a new court by the natural graces and acknowledged fashions of an old one. All who remember society at this time, will remember that the ex-minister was the sole person who had a sort of existence and reputation, separate and distinct from the chief of the State, whose policy he now affected to consider, and probably did consider, as verging towards the passion of a desperate gambler, who

would continue to tempt Fortune until she grew wearied and deserted him.

Nor did the Austrian alliance, which the Emperor had lately formed, meet with M. de Talleyrand's approval, although he had at one period advised it, and been also mixed up in the question of a marriage with the imperial family of Russia. This change might have proceeded from his now seeing that such an union as he had at one time favoured, in the hope that it would calm the restless energy of Napoleon, would only stimulate his ambition: or it might have been because, having had nothing to do with the resolutions adopted at Vienna, he had gained nothing by them. At all events, what he said with apparent sincerity, was —"Nothing is ever got by a policy which you merely carry out by halves." "If the Emperor wants an alliance with Austria, he should satisfy Austria: does he think that the House of Hapsburg considers it an honour to ally itself with the House of Bonaparte? What the Emperor of Austria desires, is to have his provinces restored, and his empire raised and revived: if the government of France does not do this, it disappoints him, and the worst enemies we can have are those we disappoint."

These sentiments, however, found as yet no echo out of the circle of a few independent and enlightened politicians.

I remember two of these—both high in the service of the Empire—M. de Barante and M. Molé, referring in my hearing to a conversation they had had at the period I am speaking of, and one saying to the other, "Do you remember how we both looked at what was passing before us, magnificent it was, as a scene in an opera, on which the curtain would drop before the eyes of the spectators, who were then gazing on it with admiration, were closed?"

But the masses were still dazzled by the splendid achievements of a man who, of all others, in ancient or modern history, would have been the greatest if he had joined the instincts of humanity with those of genius: and now each day that passed added to the fatal disposition which separated his future from his past; each hour he became more haughty and self-confident, and more inclined to an isolated career, which neither tolerated counsel nor clung to affection. Josephine, the wife of his youth—Pauline, his favourite sister—Louis, his youngest brother—Massena, his ablest general—were added to the list on which his two ablest

ministers were inscribed. He had no longer even the idea of conciliating mankind to his arbitrary authority. His mighty intellect, subdued by his still mightier ambition, submitted itself to adopt a system of despotism and oppression which interfered not only with the political opinions, but with the daily wants, of all his subjects and all his allies.

War with him had become an effort to exterminate those who still opposed him, by oppressing those who had hitherto aided him. Thus, he had seized the Roman pontiff, kidnapped the Spanish king, taken violent possession of the Hanseatic towns and the North of Germany; and even those countries which were free from his armies, were bound, as he contended, to obey his decrees. In this state of things commenced the last and fatal struggle between the two potentates who had at first divided the world which they were now about to fight for. Nor was the justice of M. de Talleyrand's views ever more conspicuous! The destruction of Prussia, by making Russia and France neighbours, had in itself tended to make them enemies. Moreover, the proud and offended, but dissimulating, Czar, though redoubling his courtesy towards the court of France

after the choice of an Austrian archduchess, lest he might be supposed hurt by the rejection of a marriage with a princess of his own family, had begun to feel that, with the rest of continental Europe subdued and Austria apparently gained, he was alone in his independence; and to fret under the rein, which his imperious rider pulled, with superb indifference, somewhat too tightly.

Besides, though invested with unbounded authority over his people by law and custom, there was the example of his father to teach him that he could not wholly disregard their interests or wishes; yet this was what the Emperor of the French exacted from him. His subjects were not to sell their produce to the only purchaser who was ready and desirous to buy it;—and being thus harshly and foolishly placed between revolution and war, Alexander chose the latter.

XI.

On the other hand, Napoleon, in determining on a conflict of which he did not disguise to himself the importance, awoke for a moment to his former sense of the necessity of using able men in great affairs, and was disposed, notwithstanding his dis-

agreements with M. de Talleyrand, to send him to Warsaw to organise a kingdom of Poland; nor was it surprising that, confident in the sagacity and tact of the agent he thought of employing, he was also satisfied that, in the event of that agent's accepting employment, he might count perfectly on his fidelity; for throughout M. de Talleyrand's long career and frequent changes there is not any instance of his having betrayed any one from whom he accepted a trust. The difficulty of reconciling the Prince de Benevent's position with that of the Duc de Bassano, who accompanied the Emperor on this campaign as minister of foreign affairs, prevented, it is said, this arrangement. But neither during this transient gleam of returning favour, nor after it, did M. de Talleyrand's opinion against the chances which Napoleon was unnecessarily (as he thought) running, ever vary; neither were they disguised. What he insisted on principally was the chances of war, which often decide against the ablest general and the most skilful combinations; on the imminent catastrophe which would result from a defeat, and the small result that would follow a victory. The whole of Europe that the reckless general left behind him was, he knew, kept down merely by fear and con-

straint, and though ready to assist an advancing army, certain to fall on a retreating one. Besides, supposing defeat was almost impossible, what had France to gain by success?

Alexander might reiterate his promise of preventing all commercial interchange between Great Britain and his dominions; but would he be able to keep that promise? He could not. The mind of Napoleon, however, had now been trained by Fortune to consider wars mere military parades, shortly after the commencement of which he entered the capital of his conquered enemy and returned to Paris to be greeted by enthusiastic acclamations at the theatre. He craved this sort of excitement, and like most men similarly influenced, convinced himself that what was pleasing to his vanity was demanded by his interests.

There were three epochs, indeed, in Napoleon's career: the first, when he fought for glory abroad to gain empire at home; the second, when, being master of the government of France, he fought to extend the limits of France and to make himself the most powerful individual and his nation the most powerful nation in the world; the third, when France being but a secondary consideration, his ambition was bent on becoming master of the universe, and

acquiring a dominion of which France would be almost an insignificant portion.

It is necessary to bear this in mind, since it explains Napoleon's Russian campaign; it explains the difficulties he raised against withdrawing his troops from Germany after that campaign had ended in defeat; and his constant dislike to accept any conditions that put a positive extinguisher on his gigantic projects. To support his own confidence in such projects he persuaded himself that a charm attached to his existence, that supernatural means would arrive to him when natural means failed. He did not, however, neglect on this occasion the natural means.

When Fouché expressed his apprehensions at so vast an enterprise, the soldier's answer is said to have been, "I wanted 800,000 men, and I have them."* But France had begun to be at this period wearied even with his successes; and the affair of Mallet, which happened just previously to the arrival of the bad intelligence from Russia, shewed pretty clearly that her Emperor's fall or defeat left an open space for any new system or *régime* that circumstances might favour or impose.

* "Il me fallait 800,000 hommes, et je les ai."—*Mémoires de Fouché*, vol. ii. p. 113.

No sooner, then, had the news of Moscow's being burnt reached Paris than M. de Talleyrand considered the Bonapartist cause as lost. Not that Bonaparte might not yet have saved himself by prudence, but he was not prudent; not but that the French government might not yet have brought as many men in uniform into the field as the allies, but that nations fought on one side, and merely soldiers on the other.

The sagacious statesman, therefore, who now began again to be consulted, advised a conclusion of the war, promptly, at once, and on almost all conditions. So, again, when the defection of the Prussians was known, and Napoleon summoned a council to determine what should be done under such circumstances, he said: "Negotiate: you have now in your hands effects which you can give away; to-morrow they may be gone, and then the power to negotiate advantageously will be gone also."*

During the armistice at Prague (June, 1813), when the prestige of two or three recent victories coloured the negotiations, and France might have had Holland, Italy, and her natural frontiers, both Talleyrand and Fouché, who was also asked for

* *Mémoires de Rovigo*, vol. vi. p. 66.

his advice, repeated constantly, "The Emperor has but one thing to do—to make peace; and the more quickly he makes it, the better he will make it." So also, when M. de St. Aignan, after the battle of Leipsic, brought propositions from Frankfort, which might even yet have given France her frontier of the Rhine (November), M. de Talleyrand urged their acceptance with the least delay, and told the Emperor that a bad peace was better than the continuation of a war that could not end favourably.*

Napoleon himself at this time wavered, and with a momentary doubt as to his own judgment, and a remembrance very possibly of happier times, offered the portfolio of foreign affairs to his ancient minister, but on the condition that he should lay down the rank and emoluments of vice-grand-elector.

The object of the Emperor was thus to make M. de Talleyrand entirely dependent on his place; but M. de Talleyrand, who would have accepted the office, refused the condition, saying: "If the Emperor trusts me, he should not degrade

* "Une mauvaise paix ne peut nous devenir aussi funeste que la continuation d'une guerre qui ne peut plus nous être favorable."—*Mémoires de Rovigo*, vol. vi p. 229.

me; and if he does not trust me, he should not employ me; the times are too difficult for half measures."

XII.

The state of affairs at this period was assuredly most critical. In Spain, an English army, crowned by victory, was about to descend from the Pyrenees. In Germany, a whole population, whom former defeat had exasperated, and recent success encouraged, burned to cross the Rhine in search of the trophies that an enemy still boasted. In Italy, a defection in the Emperor's family was about to display the full extent of his misfortunes. In Holland, the colours of the exiled family (the House of Orange) were displayed with rapture amidst shouts for national independence; even the King of Denmark had left the French alliance; while in France a people unanimated by liberty, an army decimated by defeat, generals that had lost their hopes, and arsenals which were empty of arms, were the sole resources with which its ruler had to encounter all Europe in arms.

The refusal of M. de Talleyrand, then, to accept office at such a time, unless with all the confidence and splendour that could give it authority, was

natural enough; but it is also not surprising that the sovereign who had made that offer should have been irritated by its rejection, whilst many urged that the vice-grand-elector, if not employed, should be arrested. All proof, however, of treason was wanting; and the chief of the Empire justly dreaded the effect which any violent act might produce both at home and abroad; for it was far more difficult than many have supposed for him to strike, when his power was once on the decline, any strong blow against an eminent functionary. His government was a government of functionaries, throughout whom there reigned a sort of fraternity that could not safely be braved.

This stern man had, moreover—and this was one of the most remarkable and amiable portions of his character—a sort of tenderness, which he never overcame, for those who had once been attached to his person, or had done eminent service to his authority.* He resolved, then, not to take any violent measure against M. de Talleyrand; but though he could restrain his anger from acts, he could not from expressions.

* "'Jamais,' dit-il au dignitaire qui le lui insinuait, 'jamais je ne donnerai la main à la perte d'un homme qui m'a longtemps servi.'"—*Mémoires de Rovigo*, vol. vi. p. 298.

A variety of scenes was the consequence. Savary relates one which happened in his presence and that of the arch-chancellor. I have also read of one in which Napoleon, having said that if he thought his own death likely he would take care that the vice-grand-elector should not survive him, was answered by M. de Talleyrand, rejoining quietly and respectfully, that he did not require that reason for desiring that his Majesty's life might be long preserved. M. Molé recounted to me another, in the following terms: "At the end of the Council of State, which took place just before the Emperor started for the campaign of 1814, he burst out into some violent exclamations of his being surrounded by treachery and traitors; and then turning to M. de Talleyrand, abused him for ten minutes in the most violent and outrageous manner. Talleyrand was standing by the fire all this time, guarding himself from the heat of the flame by his hat; he never moved a limb or a feature; any one who had seen him would have supposed that he was the last man in the room to whom the Emperor could be speaking; and finally, when Napoleon, slamming the door violently, departed, Talleyrand quietly took the arm of M. Mollien,

and limped with apparent unconsciousness downstairs. But on getting home, he wrote a dignified letter to the Emperor, saying, that if he retained his present dignity, he should be by right one of the regency, and that as he could not think of holding such a charge after the opinion his Majesty had expressed of him, he begged to resign his post, and to be allowed to retire into the country. He was informed, however, that his resignation would not be accepted, and that he might stay where he was."

It is to be presumed that insults like that I have been relating went a great way towards alienating and disgusting the person they were meant to humiliate; but though at the head of a considerable party which were dissatisfied, M. de Talleyrand did little more than watch the proceedings of 1814, and endeavour to make the fall of Napoleon, should it take place, as little injurious to France and to himself as possible.*

* M. Thiers gives the account of such a scene as we have just described, but fixes it in 1809; nothing is omitted, not even the position of M. de Talleyrand and his hat; and in this account M. Thiers makes Napoleon accuse Talleyrand of the murder of the Duc d'Enghien.

I cannot but believe that M. Thiers's authority has been incorrect. Count Molé could not be mistaken as to dates and facts, for he was present at the scene I have related, and stated to me all the details, as I have given them, without touching on the Duc d'Enghien, which

During the conferences at Chatillon, he told those whom the Emperor most trusted, that he would be lost if he did not take peace on any terms; when, however, towards the end of these conferences, peace seemed impossible with Napoleon, he permitted the Duc Dalberg to send M. de Vitrolles to the allied camp with the information, that, if the allies did not make war against France, but simply against its present ruler, they would find friends in Paris ready to help them. M. de Vitrolles carried a slip of paper from the Duc in his boot as his credentials, and was allowed to name M. de Talleyrand; but had nothing from that personage himself which could compromise him irrevocably with this mission.

M. de Talleyrand saw, nevertheless, at that moment, that a new chief must, as a matter of course, be given to France, and he wished to be the person to decide who that chief should be, and under what sort of institutions the government should be assigned to him.

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he certainly would have spoken of had Napoleon himself done so. The Emperor's reproaches were, according to Count Molé, entirely confined to what he considered were M. de Talleyrand's intrigues at that particular time—intrigues which were not, however, then further advanced than in clearing away the obstacles which might interfere with his defection, if Napoleon was ultimately defeated.

Still, his communications with the Bourbons were, I believe, merely indirect. Many of their partisans were his relatives and friends. He said obliging things of Louis XVIII. to them, and he received obliging messages in return; but he did not positively adopt their cause; in fact, it seems doubtful whether he did not for a certain time hesitate between the ancient race, and the Duc de Reichstadt with a council of regency, in which he was to have had a place. At all events, he kept the minister of police, according to Savary's own account, alive to the Royalist movements in the south. It may even be said that he did not desert the Bonaparte dynasty till it deserted itself: for at the Council, assembled when the allies were approaching Paris to determine whether the Empress should remain in the capital or quit it, he advised her stay in the strongest manner, saying it was the best, if not the only, means of preserving the dynasty, and he did not cease urging this opinion until Joseph Bonaparte produced a letter from his brother, stating that in such a case as that under consideration Marie-Louise should retire into the provinces. It was then that, on leaving the council chamber, he said to Savary:

* "Here, then, is the end of all this. Is not that also your opinion? we lose the rubber with a fair game. But see where the stupidity of a few ignorant men, who exercise with perseverance an influence of every day, ends by carrying one. In truth, the Emperor is much to be pitied, and yet nobody will pity him; for his obstinacy in holding to those whom he has listened to, has no reasonable motive; it is only a weakness which cannot be conceived in such a man. What a fall in history! To give his name to adventures, instead of giving it to his age! When I think of this, I cannot help being grieved. And now what shall I do? It does not suit every one to be crushed under the ruins of the edifice that is to be overthrown. Well, we shall see what will happen!

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* "Eh bien! voilà donc la fin de tout ceci. N'est-ce pas aussi votre opinion? Ma foi! c'est perdre une partie à beau jeu. Voyez un peu où mène la sottise de quelques ignorants qui exercent avec persévérance une influence de chaque jour. Pardieu! l'Empereur est bien à plaindre, et on ne le plaindra pas, parce que son obstination à garder son entourage n'a pas de motif raisonable; ce n'est que de la faiblesse qui ne se comprend pas dans un homme tel que lui. Voyez, monsieur, quelle chute dans l'histoire! Donner son nom à des aventures au lieu de le donner à son siècle! Quand je pense à cela je ne puis m'empêcher d'en gémir. Maintenant quel parti prendre? Il ne convient pas à tout le monde de se laisser engloutir sous les ruines de cet édifice. Allons, nous verrons ce qui arrivera!

"The Emperor, instead of abusing me, would have done better in estimating at their first value those who set him against me. He should have seen that friends of that kind are to be more dreaded than enemies. What would he say to another who let himself be reduced to the state in which he is now?"

XIII.

The observation that it did not suit every one to be overwhelmed under the ruins of the government about to fall, applied, as it was intended to do by M. de Talleyrand, to himself. The part, however, he had to play was still a difficult one; desirous to remain in Paris in order to treat with the allies, he was ordered, as a member of the regency, to Blois. Nor was it merely because he feared that Napoleon might yet conquer, and punish his disobedience, that he disliked to resist his command; there is a sense of decency in

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"L'Empereur, au lieu de me dire des injures, aurait mieux fait de juger ceux qui lui inspiraient des préventions; il aurait vu que des amis comme ceux-là sont plus à craindre que des ennemis. Que dirait-il d'un autre s'il s'était laissé mettre dans cet état?"—*Mémoires du Duc de Rovigo*, cités par M. Thiers.

public men which sometimes supplies the place of principle, and the vice-grand-elector wished to avoid the appearance of deserting the cause which notwithstanding he had resolved to abandon.

The expedient he adopted was a singular and characteristic one. His state carriage was ordered and packed for the journey: he set out in it with great pomp and ceremony, and found, according to an arrangement with Madame de Rémusat, her husband at the head of a body of the National Guard at the barrier, who stopped him, declared he should remain in the capital, and conducted him back to his hotel, in the Rue St. Florentin, in which he had soon the honour of receiving the Emperor Alexander.

The success of the campaign had been so rapid, the march to Paris so bold, the name of Napoleon and the valour of the French army were still so formidable, that the Emperor of the Russias was almost surprised at the situation in which he found himself, and desirous to escape from it by any peace that could be made safely, quickly, and with some chance of duration. Beyond this, he had no fixed idea. The re-establishment of the Bourbons, to which the English Government inclined, seemed to him in some respects dangerous, as well on

account of the long absence of these princes from France, as from their individual character and the prejudices of their personal adherents. To a treaty with Napoleon he had also reasonable objection. Some intermediate plan was the one perhaps most present to his mind; a regency with Marie-Louise, a substitution of Bernadotte for Bonaparte; but all plans of this sort were vague, and to be tested by the principle of establishing things in the manner most satisfactory to Europe, and least hateful to France.

Universal opinion pointed out M. de Talleyrand as the person not only most able to form, but most able to carry out at once, whatever plan was best suited to the emergency. This is why, on arriving at Paris, the Emperor took up his abode at M. de Talleyrand's house, Rue St. Florentin, where he held, under the auspices of his host, a sort of meeting or council which determined the destiny of France.

XIV.

Among various relations concerning this council is that of M. Bourrienne, and if we are to believe this witness of the proceedings he recounts, M. de

Talleyrand thus answered the Emperor's suggestion as to the crown prince of Sweden, and pronounced on the various pretensions that had been successively brought forward:

"Sire, you may depend upon it, there are but two things possible, Bonaparte or Louis XVIII. I say Bonaparte; but here the choice will not depend wholly on your Majesty, for you are not alone. If we are to have a soldier, however, let it be Napoleon; he is the first in the world. I repeat it, sire: Bonaparte or Louis XVIII.; each represents a party, any other merely an intrigue."

It was a positive opinion thus forcibly expressed that, according to all accounts, decided the conqueror, who is said to have declared subsequently:

"When I arrived at Paris, I had no plan. I referred everything to Talleyrand; he had the family of Napoleon in one hand, and that of the Bourbons in the other; I took what he gave me."

The resolution not to treat with Napoleon or his family being thus taken, M. de Talleyrand engaged the Emperor of Russia to make it known by a proclamation placarded on the walls of Paris, and the public read in every street that "Les

souverains alliés ne traiteront plus ni avec Napoléon Bonaparte ni avec aucun membre de sa famille."

But this was not all. M. de Talleyrand did not wish to escape from the despotism of Napoleon to fall under that of Louis XVIII. He counted little on royal gratitude, and it was as necessary for his own security, as for that of his country, that the passions of the emigration and the pride of the House of Bourbon should be kept in check by a constitution. Hence, at his instigation, the famous proclamation I refer to contained the following sentence: "Ils reconnaîtront et garantiront la constitution que la nation française se donnera, et invitent par conséquent le Sénat à désigner un gouvernement provisoire qui puisse pourvoir aux besoins de l'administration; il préparera la constitution qui conviendra au peuple français. Alexander. 31 mars 1814."

In this manner the allies recognised the Senate as the representative of the French nation, and, as M. de Talleyrand had a predominant influence with the Senate, his victory seemed secure.

This was on the 31st March. But on the 30th, late towards the night, and as Marmont and Mortier, having defended the heights of Paris

valiantly during the day, were quitting that city in virtue of a capitulation they had been compelled by the circumstances in which they found themselves to sign, Napoleon, who had taken the advance of his army, arrived at the environs of his capital, and learnt from General Belliard, who was leaving it, what had occurred. With the view of collecting his troops, still on their march, at Fontainebleau, and gaining time for this purpose, he sent Caulincourt, who had represented him at Chatillon, to the sovereigns, who were then masters of the situation, with orders to enter into feigned negotiations with them, on almost any terms.

Now, though the Czar and the King of Prussia had pretty well resolved to have nothing further to do with Napoleon, and had stated that resolution in a pretty decided manner, there was disquietude in the neighbourhood of the great captain, who could rely on a military force, amounting, it was said, to 50,000, exclusive of the forces of Marmont and Mortier. The armies of Augereau and Soult also still existed at no immense distance. The lower class in Paris, who had more national sentiments and less personal interests in jeopardy than the upper, were, as it had been remarked in the

passage of the Russian and Prussian troops through Paris, moody and discontented; a shadow of the former terror of Napoleon's power still remained in the minds of many who had so long bowed to his will, and were only half disposed to overthrow his authority. Negotiations, as Caulincourt's presence at Paris proved, would be attempted.

There was no time then to be lost. On the 1st April, M. de Talleyrand assembled the Senate under his presidence (for, as vice-president and grand dignitary of the Empire, this function legitimately belonged to him). That body, surprised at its own power, and placing it readily in its president's hands (who, alluding to Marie-Louise's retreat, called on them to come to the aid of a government "*délaissé*"), named, "*séance tenante*," a provisional government consisting, with M. de Talleyrand at its head, of five members. These persons represented illustrations in the Empire or the Constituante; the Abbé Montesquieu being the only decided Legitimist.

At the same time the Senate, entirely partaking M. de Talleyrand's ideas as to a constitution, engaged itself to form one within a few days.

Nothing, however, was as yet said of the in-

tended exclusion of Napoleon and his family, nor of the approaching reign of the Bourbons.

Many of the partisans of the latter were as much astonished as vexed at this omission.

Still entertaining ideas which they had carried into a long exile, they could not even conceive what France, or the French Senate, or the allies, had to do with the disposal of the French government. Was not Louis XVIII. the next in blood to Louis XVI.? Could there be a doubt that he was the only possible king, the unholy and audacious usurper having been defeated?

Did not the Comte d'Artois, said the ladies of the Faubourg St. Germain, long to embrace his early associate, the Bishop of Autun?

M. de Talleyrand, with a smile slightly cynical, acknowledged the extreme happiness that this embrace would give him; but begged, half mysteriously, that it might be deferred for the present. He did not, however, think it expedient that the Senate should delay any longer confirming the act of the coalition as to Napoleon's deposition; and that assembly (exposing, as the motives of its conduct, a thousand grievances which it had been its previous duty to prevent), declared, as the Emperor Alexander had already declared, that

neither Napoleon nor his family should reign in France, and relieved the nation from its oath of allegiance.

It named also a ministry composed of men suited for the occasion, and thus assumed provisionally all the attributes of government.

In the meantime the deposed Emperor, still at Fontainebleau, with an energy which misfortune had not abated, was counting his gathering forces, studying the position of his foes, and forming the plan for a final and desperate effort, which consisted in defeating one of the three divisions of the enemy, which was on the left bank of the Seine, and following it in its flight into the streets of Paris, where, amidst the general confusion, he felt certain of an easy victory, even if amongst the blazing ruins of the imperial city.

With him losses that led to success were not calculated: and though he should have preferred victory on other terms, he was perfectly willing to take it as he could get it. At least, this was said, and the intention attributed to him, and which he did not deny, having been promulgated before it was executed, shattered the remaining fidelity of his superior officers. He could not understand their timorous scruples; nor

they his desperate resolves. An altercation ensued, and, rendered bold by despair, the marshals ventured to urge his abdication in favour of his son. He foresaw the futility of this proposition, but was nevertheless induced to accede to it, partly in order to show the idleness of the hopes which his unwelcome counsellors affected to cherish, partly in order to get rid of their presence, which left him free, as he thought, to execute his original projects, should he determine on doing so.

Ney, Macdonald, together with Caulincourt, who had rejoined the Emperor on the 2nd of April, and communicated the inefficacy of his previous mission, were sent then to the allied sovereigns; they were to enumerate their remaining forces, protest as to their unwavering fidelity to that family, the fortunes of which they had so long followed—declare resolutely against the legitimate princes, whom they considered strangers to their epoch; and state, with firmness, their resolve to conquer or perish by the side of their ancient master, if this, the last proposal they could make in his name, were rejected.

They carried with them Marmont, at the head of the important division of Bonaparte's army stationed on the Essonne, and commanding the

position of Fontainebleau. This general, though the one most favoured by Napoleon, had nevertheless already entered into a capitulation with the Austrian general; but urged by his brother marshals, to whom he confessed his treason, to retract his engagements, he did so; and ordering those officers under his command, and who had been acquainted with his designs, to remain quiet till his return, accompanied Ney and Macdonald to Paris.

The haughty bearing, the bold and vehement language, of men accustomed to command and conquer, and representing an army which had marched victoriously from Paris to Moscow, made an impression on the somewhat flexible Alexander. He did not accord nor deny their petition, and granted them another interview on the morrow, at which the King of Prussia was to be present. This one took place on the 5th of April, at two in the morning, with himself alone.

The struggle was yet undecided; for the Emperor of Russia was never very favourable, as I have said, to the Legitimists, and quite alone to the consideration of settling matters quietly with Bonaparte, who had arms in his hands, rather than with the Bourbons, who had not. M. de Talleyrand had again to exert himself, and with

his easy, respectful, but self-confident manner, to point out the feebleness and dishonour of which (though acting under feelings of the noblest generosity) the Czar would be accused, if, after having compromised himself and his allies by what he had been doing during the last few days, he was at last to undo it. He added, as it is said, that he did not, in holding this language, consult his own interests, for it was probable that he should have a more durable position under the regency of Marie-Louise, if such a regency could be durable, than under that of the emigration, which it was much to be feared, from what was then passing (he wished to call the Emperor's attention to the efforts which this party was at that very moment making against the publication of a constitution), would, ere long, become more powerful and more forgetful than could be desired. "Pardon my observations, Sir," he continued—"others are uneasy, but I am not—for I know full well that a sovereign at the head of a valorous army is not likely to admit the dictation of a few officers of a hostile force, more particularly when they represent the very principle of constant war which the French nation repudiates, and which has armed the allies."

Both the Emperor Alexander (whose transitory emotion soon passed away) and the King of Prussia received the marshals on the following day, under the impressions that M. de Talleyrand's remarks and their own considerate judgment produced; and the refusal to treat on any basis that gave the government of France to Napoleon or his family, was clearly but courteously pronounced. The marshals were persisting in their representations, when a Russian officer, who had just entered the room, whispered something into Alexander's ear: it was the intelligence that the division of Marshal Marmont had quitted its post; an accident produced by the officers, to whom he had confided his troops, having fancied that their intended treachery was discovered, and would be punished, unless immediately consummated. After such a defection, the moral power of the deputation, which could no longer speak in the name of the army, was gone; and all it attempted to procure was an honourable provision for the Emperor and the Empress, if the former tendered an immediate abdication. The advice of his generals, who accepted these poor conditions, left their commander no alternative but submission, for his government was a military

machine, of which the main instrument now broke in his hands.

On the 6th, the Senate framed a constitution, which, on the 8th, was published, creating a constitutional monarchy, with two chambers, and conferring the throne of France on Louis XVIII. if he accepted that constitution. On the 11th was signed a treaty by which Marie-Louise and her son received the principality of Parma, and Napoleon the sovereignty of Elba, a small island on the coast of Italy, where it was presumed that a man, still in the prime of life and with the most restless spirit that ever beat in human bosom, would remain quiet and contented in the sight of empires he had won and lost.

TALLEYRAND,

THE POLITIC MAN.

PART V.

Comte d'Artois, Lieutenant-General of France.—Treaty of the 23rd of April for the evacuation of France.—Louis XVIII., contrary to M. de Talleyrand's advice, refuses to accept the crown with a constitution as the gift of the nation; but, agreeing to the first as a right, grants the second.—Forms his government of discordant materials, naming M. de Talleyrand, of whom his distrust and jealousy soon appear, Minister of Foreign Affairs.—Reactionary spirit of the Émigré party and Comte d'Artois.—Treaty of Paris.—M. de Talleyrand then goes to Vienna, and, in the course of negotiations there, contrives to make a separate treaty with Austria and Great Britain, and thus to break up solidarity of the alliance against France.—Bonaparte escapes from Elba.—New treaty against Napoleon; not clear as to its intentions, but appearing as renewal of Treaty of Paris.—Bourbons go to Ghent.—Bonaparte installed at the Tuileries.—M. de Talleyrand goes to Carlsbad.—Prince Metternich intrigues with Fouché for Napoleon's deposition in favour of the regency of his wife; does not succeed.—The Allies again take up Louis XVIII.—M. de Talleyrand goes to Ghent.—At first ill received.—Lectures the Bourbons.—Is again made Minister.—Opposed by Royalist party and the Emperor of Russia; feebly supported by us; abandoned by Louis XVIII.—Resigns.

PART V.

FROM THE FALL OF THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON, IN 1814, TO THE END OF M. DE TALLEYRAND'S ADMINISTRATION, IN SEPTEMBER, 1815.

I.

SUCH for the moment was the end of the long struggle which M. de Talleyrand had maintained with a man superior to all others in the power of his faculties; but who, owing to certain faults, which were perhaps inseparable from the haughty and imaginative nature of those faculties, was finally vanquished by the patience, moderation, and tact of an adversary of far inferior genius, whose hostility he had, by a singular instinct, dreaded, and, by an unaccountable carelessness, provoked.

I have said that when M. de Talleyrand first attached himself to the destinies of Napoleon, he expected from him—first, his own advancement; secondly, the advancement of French interests.

He followed Napoleon, then, obsequiously up to

the period at which he foresaw clearly that the policy of that personage was beginning to be such as would neither profit an intelligent adherent nor a durable empire.

It cannot be said, however, that in separating himself from this policy, after the treaty of Tilsit, he left his sovereign in a moment of adversity. France never appeared to people in general so great, nor its ruler so stable, as at that epoch. It was not at the moment of any evident decline in either, but at a moment when to a keen observer there was visible a tendency which if pursued would, a little sooner or a little later, plunge both into inextricable calamities, that the Prince de Benevent detached himself quietly from the chariot that bore the great soldier's fortunes.

Even then he did little more than express with moderation the convictions he felt; and indeed his opposition when most provoked was never against the individual whom he had served, but against the system that individual was blindly pursuing. As the horizon grew darker, he neither shrank from giving his advice, which events proved invariably to be just, nor refused his services, if they were allowed the necessary means of being useful. His infidelity up to the last consisted in giving

counsel that was rejected, and taking measures with much reserve for preserving himself and his country in some degree from the fate that was preparing for its ruler. Nor was it until Napoleon and the nation became two distinct things, and it appeared necessary to destroy the one in order to save the other, that it can be said that M. de Talleyrand conspired against the man, who, it must be added, never asked for heartfelt devotion in exacting blind obedience.

There was nothing on earth, in fact, which Napoleon himself would not have sacrificed, and did not unscrupulously sacrifice, to promote his own objects. He said, and I believe thought, that these were the happiness and glory of France. Behind his selfishness there was, all must admit, a great and noble idea; but those who felt sure that he was mistaken were not bound to subject their notions of patriotism to his: M. de Talleyrand had not been his creature, nor raised up from the dust by him. He had been a distinguished and eminent man before General Bonaparte's career had commenced, and it is hardly fair to talk of his treachery to a man, who had of late years wearied him with affronts,—when the most intimate of that man's favourites (Marshal Berthier) told Louis XVIII. at the

commencement of the Restoration, "that France had groaned for twenty-five years under the weight of misfortunes that only disappeared at the sight of its legitimate sovereign."

The principal if not the only question at issue concerning M. de Talleyrand in these affairs is, Whether the advice to place Louis XVIII. on the French throne was good or bad advice? What other candidates were there? Bonaparte vanquished was out of the question. He had not only become odious to M. de Talleyrand; he was equally so to all Europe and to all France,—the broken fragments of his army excepted.

There was something to say in favour of a regency with Marie-Louise; but her husband himself declared at Fontainebleau that she was incapable of acting for herself. If Napoleon was in a situation to direct her, the government was evidently still Napoleon's. If she was placed in the hands of the marshals, the exchange was that of a military empire with order and a redoubtable chief, for a military empire with confusion and without a chief; Marie-Louise was, moreover, out of Paris.

Had she remained at Paris, had Bonaparte perished on the field of battle, or been placed any-

where in secure guardianship, the daughter of the Emperor of Austria, assisted and controlled by four or five men of eminence, moderation, and capacity, whom the allies could have joined to her, might have been a possibility more compatible perhaps with the epoch than the half-forgotten inheritor of the crown of Louis XVI.; but when the choice was to be made, this combination had gone by.

Then there was the House of Orleans. But this younger branch of the Bourbon family was personally almost as unknown to France as the elder one. The name that connected it with the Revolution was not popular, on the other hand, even with the revolutionists. A mere soldier put on Napoleon's throne by foreigners was an evident humiliation to the French people. Louis XVIII., therefore, really seems the only person at the moment who could carry with him to the vacant place any dignity, and represent there, as M. de Talleyrand said, any principle.

This prince in early life had been supposed favourable to constitutional government. His residence of late years had been in a constitutional country. He had never been remarkable for the strength of his personal attachments, and he had, moreover, in his character, or at least in his manner, a certain

authority, which rendered it probable that he would keep in order the more zealous of his partisans.

Thus, it seemed likely that he would frankly accept such a government as England possessed and France had desired in 1789, to the opinions of which period the more thinking portions of the French nation still looked back with respect.

Risks had to be run, whatever resolution might be taken; but risks in critical times have always to be run, and a man of action can only choose the least dangerous.

II.

At all events, having deliberately adopted the legitimate monarchy with a constitution, there can be no doubt as to M. de Talleyrand having followed up this idea, amidst immense difficulties, with great boldness and dexterity. The task, however, so far as it depended on his skill, tact, and activity, was now nearly over; and its ultimate success was about to be confided to those who were to reap the fruits of his efforts. It will have been seen, by what I have said of the constitution voted by the Senate, that Louis XVIII. was named King conditionally on his accepting a constitu-

tion; a clause against which the Royalists had revolted.

The Comte d'Artois, at that time out of Paris and in no recognised position, insisted on appearing in the capital; and, Napoleon having abdicated on the 11th, executed his intention on the 12th, assuming the title of "Lieutenant-general of the Kingdom," a title which he pretended to have received from his brother, but which his brother, it appears, had never given him.

Nothing could be more awkward than the position thus created: Louis XVIII. was not yet sovereign by any national act; and yet the Comte d'Artois pretended that he was invested with royal authority by Louis XVIII.

To establish as a right the Bourbon monarchy, was by no means the intention of those who had called back the Bourbon family: and yet they had so compromised themselves to the Bourbon cause, that it was no easy matter to recede from the ground they stood upon. The resolution to be taken had to be immediate. Should the existing authorities assist at the Comte d'Artois' entry or not? M. de Talleyrand and the provisional government did assist, for their abstinence would have been a scandal; the Senate did not assist,

for its presence would have stultified its previous decisions.

I am led to insert an animated account of this entry, not only because it is painted with the colouring of an eye-witness; but because it gives an amusing description of the concoction of a celebrated *bon mot*, which was not without its effect on the early popularity of the prince to whom it was attributed.

* "Next morning (12th of April), we marched out to meet the prince. It was one of those lovely days of early spring which are so delightful in the climate of Paris. The sun was shining with all its splendour, and on every side the tender buds were sprouting under the influence of its subdued and genial warmth. There were flowers already half blown, and the soft green was just beginning to peep from the trees, while the spring notes of birds, the joyous expression of every face, our march enlivened by the dear old tune of good

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* "Le lendemain, 12 avril, on se mit en marche pour aller au-devant de Monsieur. Le temps était admirable; c'était un de ces premiers jours du printemps, ravissants sous la température de Paris, où le soleil brille de tout son éclat, et ne distribue qu'une chaleur douce aux germes encore tendres qui sourdissent de toutes parts. Quelques fleurs déjà entr'ouvertes, un vert tendre qui commençait à poindre sur les arbres, le chant des oiseaux printaniers, l'air de joie répandu sur les figures, et

King Henry, all served to mark out this day as a festival of Hope. There was little order in our ranks, but many shed tears. As soon as *Monsieur* was in sight, M. de Talleyrand advanced to welcome him, and, leaning against the prince's horse with that indolent grace, which the weakness of his legs excused, he paid him a short compliment, remarkable for its delicacy and good taste. Feeling that Frenchmen were pressing him on all sides, the prince was too affected to make him a reply, but said with a voice stifled by sobs, 'Monsieur de Talleyrand, gentlemen.—Thank you —I am too happy—Let us proceed, let us proceed —I am too happy!'

"Since then, we have heard the same prince reply to speeches with presence of mind and effect; but, to

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le vieux refrain du bon Henri qui marquait la marche, avaient signalé cette entrée comme la fête de l'Espérance. Il y régnait peu d'ordre, mais on y répandait des larmes. Dès qu'on vit paraître le prince, M. de Talleyrand alla à sa rencontre, et en s'appuyant sur le cheval du prince, avec la grâce nonchalante qu'autorise la faiblesse de ses jambes, il lui débita un compliment en quatre lignes, frappé au coin d'une sensibilité exquise. Le prince, qui, de toutes parts se sentait pressé par des Français, était trop ému pour pouvoir répondre; il dit, d'une voix étouffée par les sanglots: 'Monsieur de Talleyrand, Messieurs, je vous remercie; je suis trop heureux. Marchons, marchons, je suis trop heureux!'

"Nous avons entendu depuis, le même prince répondre avec de la

those who saw and heard him the day of his entry into Paris, he has never been so eloquent as on that occasion. We now proceeded in the direction of Notre-Dame, according to the old custom of going, after every joyful event, to the most venerable church of Paris, in order to offer solemnly to God the grateful homage of the French nation. The procession was principally composed of National Guards, but it also contained Russian, Prussian, Austrian, Spanish, and Portuguese officers, and the prince at their head appeared like an angel of peace descended into the midst of the great European family. From the Barrière de Bondy to the Parvis Notre-Dame, faces beaming with joy were seen at every window. The streets were crowded with people who pressed round the prince with shouts of applause. It was

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présence d'esprit et du bonheur aux harangues qu'on lui faisait, mais, pour ceux qui l'ont vu et qui l'ont entendu à son entrée à Paris, il ne fut jamais aussi éloquent que ce jour-là. Le cortége se mit en marche pour Notre-Dame, suivant l'antique usage d'aller porter à Dieu, dans la première église de Paris, les hommages solennels des Français pour chaque événement heureux. La garde nationale formait le fond du cortége, mais il se composait aussi d'officiers russes, prussiens, autrichiens, espagnols, portugais, à la tête desquels le prince apparaissait comme un ange de paix descendu au milieu de la grande famille européenne. Depuis la Barrière de Bondy jusqu'au Parvis Notre-Dame, il n'y avait pas une fenêtre qui ne fût garnie de figures rayonnantes de joie. Le peuple, répandu dans les rues, poursuivait le prince de ses

difficult for him to advance in the midst of such general enthusiasm, but when some one attempted to clear the way by removing this pleasing impediment, he exclaimed, 'Never mind, sir, never mind, we have plenty of time before us.' Thus was the prince borne along to Notre-Dame, if I may be allowed the expression, on the hearts of Frenchmen. After entering the sanctuary, when he cast himself down before the altar, which had received during so many centuries the prayers of his fathers, a vivid ray of light fell upon his countenance, and made it appear almost heavenly. He prayed fervently, and we all did the same. The tears trickled down our cheeks, and they escaped from the eyes even of the foreigners. Oh! how sincerely, how fervently was each verse of the

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applaudissements et de ses cris. A peine pouvait-il avancer au milieu de l'ivresse générale, et il répondit à quelqu'un qui voulait écarter de si douces entraves: 'Laissez, Monsieur, laissez, j'arriverai toujours trop tôt.'

"C'est ainsi que le prince fut, s'il est permis de le dire, porté jusqu'à Notre-Dame sur les cœurs des Français; et à son entrée dans le sanctuaire, lorsqu'il se prosterna aux pieds de l'autel, qui avait durant tant de siècles, reçu les prières de ses pères, un rayon de lumière très-vive vint frapper sur sa figure et lui imprima je ne sais quoi de céleste. Il priait avec ardeur; tous priaient avec lui. Des larmes mouillaient nos yeux; il en échappait aux étrangers eux-mêmes. Oh! avec quelle vérité, avec quelle ardeur, chaque strophe de l'hymne de la reconnais-

hymn of gratitude upraised to Heaven! When the ceremony was concluded, several of the prince's old servants, who had bewailed his absence during thirty years, came to embrace his knees, and he raised them up with that heart-sprung grace so touching and so natural to him. The return from Notre-Dame to the Tuileries was no less animated and happy; and when he had reached the court of the palace, the prince dismounted, and turning to the National Guard, addressed them in a speech perfectly suited to the occasion. He shook hands with several of the officers and men, begging them to remember this happy day, and protesting that he himself would never forget it. I ordered the palace doors to be opened for the prince, and had the honour of showing him into the wing which he was to inhabit.

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sance était poussée vers les cieux! A la fin de la cérémonie, de vieux serviteurs du prince qui avaient pleuré trente ans son absence embrassaient ses genoux, et il les relevait avec cette grâce du cœur si touchante et qui lui est si naturelle. Le retour, de Notre-Dame aux Tuileries ne fut pas moins animé, moins heureux, et, parvenu dans la cour du palais, le prince descendit de cheval et adressa à la garde nationale une allocution parfaitement appliquée à la situation. Il prit la main à plusieurs officiers et soldats, les pria de se souvenir de ce beau jour, et leur protesta que lui-même ne l'oublierait jamais. Je fis ouvrir devant le prince les portes du palais et j'eus l'honneur de l'introduire dans l'aile qu'il devait habiter.

"I asked him to give me his orders for the rest of the day, and to tell me the hour at which I should present myself the next morning. He seemed to hesitate, whether he would dismiss or retain me. I thought I could perceive that this arose from kindly feeling, so I told him that I should be afraid of troubling him an instant longer, as he must be fatigued, and it was to me that he replied, 'How can I possibly be fatigued? This is the only happy day I have enjoyed for thirty years. Ah! sir, what a delightful day! Say that I am pleased and satisfied with everybody. These are my orders for to-day. To-morrow morning, at nine o'clock.'

"After leaving the prince, I resumed my usual occupation, and quitted it at about eleven o'clock in the evening, to go to M. de Talleyrand's. I found

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"Je lui demandai ses ordres pour le reste de la journée, et l'heure à laquelle je devais me présenter le lendemain pour le travail. Le prince paraissait hésiter s'il me laisserait partir ou me retiendrait. Je crus m'apercevoir que c'était indulgence de sa part, et je lui dis que je craindrais de l'occuper une minute de plus, parce que je le supposais fatigué, et c'est à moi qu'il répondit:—'Comment voulez-vous que je sois fatigué? C'est le seul jour de bonheur que j'ai goûté depuis trente ans. Ah! monsieur, quelle belle journée! Dites que je suis heureux et satisfait de tout le monde. Voilà mes ordres pour aujourd'hui—à demain, à neuf heures du matin.'

"En quittant le prince, je repris mon travail ordinaire et je le quittai

him discussing the events of the past day with MM. Pasquier, Dupont de Némours, and Anglès. They all agreed that it had been a complete success. M. de Talleyrand reminded us that an article would have to be written for the *Moniteur*. Dupont offered to do it. 'No, no,' replied M. de Talleyrand, 'you would make it too poetical; I know you well: Beugnot will do for that; I dare say that he will step into the library, and knock us off an article in a moment.'

"I sat down to my work, which was not very difficult; but when the prince's answer to M. de Talleyrand had to be mentioned, I did not know what to do. A few words, springing from a deep emotion, make effect by the manner in which they are spoken, and by the presence of the objects which have sug-

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sur les onze heures du soir pour aller chez M. de Talleyrand. Je le trouvai s'entretenant de la journée avec MM. Pasquier, Dupont de Némours, et Anglès. On s'accordait à la trouver parfaite. M. de Talleyrand rappela qu'il fallait un article au *Moniteur*. Dupont s'offrit de le faire. 'Non pas,' reprit M. de Talleyrand, 'vous y mettriez de la poésie; je vous connais. Beugnot suffit pour cela; qu'il passe dans la bibliothèque et qu'il broche bien vite un article pour que nous l'envoyions à Sauvo.'

"Je me mets à la besogne qui n'était pas fort épineuse, mais parvenu à la mention de la réponse du prince à M. de Talleyrand, j'y suis embarrassé. Quelques mots echappés à un sentiment profond produisent de l'effet par le ton dont ils sont prononcés, par la présence

gested them; but, when they have to be reproduced on paper, stripped of these accompaniments, they remain cold, and it is very lucky if they are not ridiculous. I returned to M. de Talleyrand, and informed him of the difficulty. 'Let us see,' he answered, 'what *Monsieur did* say; I did not catch much; he appeared to me to be affected, and very anxious to continue his journey; but, if what he said does not suit you, invent an answer for him.' 'But how can I make a speech that *Monsieur* never pronounced?' 'There is no difficulty about that; make it good, suitable to the person and to the occasion, and I promise you that *Monsieur* will accept it, and so well, that in two days he will believe he made it himself; and he *will* have made it himself; you will no longer have had anything

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des objets qui les ont provoqués, mais quand il s'agit de les traduire sur le papier, dépouillés de ces entours, ils ne sont plus que froids, et trop heureux s'ils ne sont pas ridicules. Je reviens à M. de Talleyrand, et je lui fais part de la difficulté.—'Voyons,' me répondit-il, 'qu'a dit *Monsieur*? Je n'ai pas entendu grand'chose; il me paraissait ému et fort curieux de continuer sa route; mais si ce qu'il a dit ne vous convient pas, faites-lui une réponse.' 'Mais comment faire un discours que *Monsieur* n'a pas tenu?' 'La difficulté n'est pas là: faites-le bon, convenable à la personne et au moment, et je vous promets que *Monsieur* l'acceptera, et si bien, qu'au bout de deux jours il croira l'avoir fait, et il l'aura fait; vous n'y serez plus pour rien.' A la bonne heure! Je rentre, j'essaye une première version, et je l'apporte à la censure. 'Ce

to do with it.' Capital! I returned and attempted my first version, and brought it to be approved. 'That won't do,' said M. de Talleyrand, '*Monsieur* never makes antitheses, nor does he use the slightest rhetorical flourish. Be brief, be plain, and say what is best suited to the speaker and to his audience: that's all.' 'It seems to me,' replied M. Pasquier, 'that what is troubling a good many minds, is the fear of changes, which would be brought about by the return of the princes of the house of Bourbon; that point would perhaps have to be touched, but delicately.' 'Good! and I also recommend it to you,' said M. de Talleyrand. 'I attempt a new version, and am sent back a second time, for having made it too long and too elaborate. At last I am delivered of the one inserted in the

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n'est pas cela,' dit M. de Talleyrand, '*Monsieur* ne fait pas d'antithèses et pas la plus petite fleur de rhétorique. Soyez court, soyez simple, et dites ce qui convient davantage à celui qui parle et à ceux qui écoutent; voilà tout.' 'Il me semble,' reprit M. Pasquier, 'que ce qui agite bon nombre d'esprits est la crainte des changements que doit occasionner le retour des princes de la maison de Bourbon; il faudrait peut-être toucher ce point, mais avec délicatesse.' 'Bien! et je le recommande,' dit M. de Talleyrand. 'J'essaye une nouvelle version et je suis renvoyé une seconde fois, parce que j'ai été trop long et que le style est apprêté. Enfin j'accouche de celle qui est au *Moniteur*, et où je fais dire au prince: "Plus de divisions: la paix et la France; je la revois enfin! et rien n'y est changé, si ce n'est qu'il s'y trouve un Français de plus."'

Moniteur, in which I make the prince say, "No more discord; Peace and France; at last I revisit my native land; nothing is changed, except it be that there is one Frenchman the more." ' 'This time I give in!' exclaimed the great censor. '*That* is what *Monsieur* said, and I answer for it having been pronounced by him; you need not trouble yourself any longer.' And in fact the speech turned out a regular success: the newspapers took it up as a lucky hit; it was also repeated as an engagement taken by the prince; and the expression, '*One Frenchman more!*' became the necessary password of the harangues, which began to pour in from all quarters. The prince did not disdain commenting upon it in his answers: and M. de Talleyrand's prophecy was fully accomplished."

'Pour cette fois je me rends!' reprit enfin le grand censeur, 'c'est bien là le discours de *Monsieur*, et je vous réponds que c'est lui qui l'a fait; vous pouvez être tranquille à présent.' Et en effet le mot fit fortune: les journaux s'en emparèrent comme d'un à propos heureux; on le reproduisit aussi comme un engagement pris par le prince, et le mot, '*un Français de plus!*' devint le passeport obligé des harangues qui vinrent pleuvoir de toutes parts. Le prince ne dédaigna pas de le commenter dans ses réponses, et la prophétie de M. de Talleyrand fut complétement réalisée."

III.

The just described spectacle was gay, but it was on the surface of things. Deeper seated was the danger I have referred to. The Senate had neither gone to meet the Comte d'Artois nor attended the *Te Deum*. It might be said that the members of the provisional government had done so; but the absence of the Senate was, notwithstanding, remarked. It was determined not to leave things uncertain, and to have a clear understanding as to whether the Comte d'Artois meant to despise the national authorities, or to submit to them. This question had to be brought to issue with the least possible delay.

The 13th and 14th of April were spent in negotiations. Napoleon was still in France. Two armies had not yet given in their adhesion to the new order of things.

The allies had solemnly declared that the French government should be one chosen by the Senate, and not one chosen by Louis XVIII.

It took, nevertheless, all M. de Talleyrand's tact and patience to get the Comte d'Artois and the zealots of his party to act with ordinary prudence.

An arrangement was at last arrived at in this manner:

The Senate, professing to know that constitutional principles animated the heart of the Comte d'Artois, offered him the Lieutenant-generalship of France.

The Comte d'Artois accepted the post, saying that though he could not take upon himself to sanction the constitution of the Senate, with which he was acquainted, but which had to be considered by the King, he nevertheless felt sure that he could safely affirm that his Majesty would accept the principal features in it.*

The government was thus installed until the

* Page 41, *du Consulat.*—"A huit heures du soir le Sénat se présenta aux Tuileries, ayant en tête son président, M. de Talleyrand. Ce personnage si bien fait pour les représentations où il fallait tempérer la fermeté par une exquise politesse, s'approcha du Prince, et selon sa coutume s'appuyant sur une canne, la tête penchée sur l'épaule, lut un discours à la fois fier et adroit, dans lequel il expliquait la conduite du Sénat sans l'excuser, car elle n'avait pas besoin d'excuse.

"'Le Sénat,' disait-il, 'a provoqué le retour de votre auguste maison au trône de France. Trop instruit par le présent et le passé, il désire avec la nation affermir pour jamais l'autorité royale sur une juste division des pouvoirs, et sur la liberté publique, seules garanties du bonheur et des intérêts de tous.

"'Le Sénat, persuadé que les principes de la constitution nouvelle sont dans votre cœur, vous défère, par le décret que j'ai l'honneur de vous présenter le titre de lieutenant-général du royaume jusqu'à l'arrivée du Roi, votre auguste frère. Notre respectueuse confiance ne peut mieux honorer l'antique loyauté qui vous fut transmise par vos ancêtres.

arrival of Louis XVIII.; and on the 23rd, M. de. Talleyrand signed, under his royal highness's authority, the treaty which obliged the foreign armies to quit France, and the French troops to quit the fortresses out of France which they still held.

"'Monseigneur, le Sénat, en ces moments d'allégresse publique, obligé de rester en apparence plus calme sur la limite de ses devoirs, n'en est pas moins pénétré des sentiments universels. Votre Altesse Royale lira dans nos cœurs à travers la retenue même de notre langage.'"

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M. de Talleyrand joignit à ces paroles fermes et respectueuses les protestations de dévouement qui étaient alors dans toutes les bouches; il y mit de moins la banalité et la bassesse qui se rencontraient dans presque toutes.

"Le Prince répondit par le texte de la déclaration convenue. 'Messieurs,' dit-il, 'j'ai pris connaissance de l'acte constitutionnel qui rappelle au trône de France le Roi, mon auguste frère. Je n'ai point reçu de lui le pouvoir d'accepter la Constitution, mais je connais ses sentiments et ses principes, et je ne crains pas d'être désavoué en assurant en son nom qu'il en admettra les bases.'

"Après cet engagement explicite, la déclaration énumérait les bases elles-mêmes, c'est-à-dire la division des pouvoirs, le partage du gouvernement entre le Roi et les Chambres, la responsabilité des ministres, le vote de l'impôt par la nation, la liberté de la presse, la liberté individuelle, la liberté des cultes, l'inamovibilité des juges, le maintien de la dette publique, des ventes, dîtes nationales, de la Légion d'Honneur, des grades et dotations de l'armée, l'oubli des votes et actes antérieurs, etc. 'J'espère ajouta le Prince, que l'énumération de ces conditions vous suffit, et comprend toutes les garanties qui peuvent assurer la liberté et le repos de la France.'"

IV.

The most urgent foreign question was thus settled; but the permanent condition of internal affairs, though the temporary arrangement I have been describing established something like a principle in favour of a constitution, still depended on the arrangements that might finally be made with Louis XVIII.

M. de Talleyrand, exceedingly anxious on this subject, had sent M. de Liancourt to the King, in the hope that his Majesty would listen and speak to his messenger confidentially. It was true that M. de Talleyrand was warned that the Duc de Liancourt, who had belonged to the Revolution, would not be well received by the monarch of the Restoration, if a certain nobleman, M. de Blacas, was by his side. But the Prince de Benevent treated this idea *du haut de sa grandeur*.

What! the sovereign who owed him (M. de Talleyrand) his throne; who was at once indolent and ambitious; who knew nothing of the country in which he was to appear, a country in which he had no partisans who could guide him by their

counsels or aid him by their influence, and in which were still the sovereigns with whom M. de Talleyrand had been the confederate — would decline to receive a man of the first respectability and the highest birth, universally beloved, because he had taken the same part that M. de Talleyrand himself had taken in the public affairs of former times, and this when the new sovereignty was to be founded on all parties and opinions, and have, moreover, a constitution for its basis; the thing was impossible. M. de Talleyrand replied to the person who gave him this warning—

"The King, you say, will look back on the past, but Nature has placed the eyes of men in the front of their heads, in order that they may look forward."

Undoubtedly, the warning referred to seemed absurd, but it was correctly given. M. de Liancourt saw "the certain M. de Blacas," but came back without having seen Louis XVIII.*

* Page 121.—"'Je sais tout cela mieux que vous,' répondit M. de Talleyrand, 'mais il ne faut pas qu'il en reste de trace dans l'esprit du roi, et c'est pour que l'oubli soit patent que j'ai choisi le duc de Liancourt; c'est l'homme du pays; il y fait du bien à tout le monde, il est placé pour en faire au roi, et je vous proteste qu'il sera bien reçu. Ce qui est passé est passé: la nature n'a pas donné aux hommes d'yeux

In sending the particular person he had selected to Louis XVIII., M. de Talleyrand, had the idea of engaging the King at once with the party to which that person belonged, viz., the moderate men of the early Revolution: men who were, by opinion, in favour of constitutional

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par derrière, c'est de ce qui est devant qu'il faut s'occuper, et il nous restera encore assez à faire. Mais cependant, si M. de Liancourt trouvait de la difficulté à approcher du Roi? Car on s'accorde à dire qu'il est sous le joug d'un M. de Blacas qui ne laisse aborder que ceux qui lui conviennent. Qu'est-ce que ce Blacas? Je ne sais pas d'où il vient et me soucie assez peu de la savoir. Nous allons entrer dans un régime constitutionnel où le crédit se mesurera sur la capacité. C'est par la tribune et par les affaires que les hommes prendront désormais leur place, et se chargera qui voudra d'épier le moment du lever et de vider les poches du roi à son coucher.'

"M. de Liancourt était en effet parti, et partageant l'illusion de M. de Talleyrand il croyait aller reprendre sans difficulté auprès du roi l'exercice de son ancienne charge de maître de la garderobe. Tous deux avaient notablement compté sans leur hôte. M. de Liancourt ne vit point le roi, mais seulement M. de Blacas, qui le congédia avec la politesse froide qui ne lui manque jamais. Le hasard me fit rencontrer M. de Liancourt au retour, et avant qu'il eût pu voir M. de Talleyrand, je lui demandai comment il avait été reçu. Il me répondit: 'Mal, très-mal, ou, pour mieux dire, pas du tout. Il y a là un certain M. de Blacas qui garde les avenues et vous croyez bien que je ne me suis pas abaissé à lutter contre; au reste, je crains fort que M. de Talleyrand n'ait donné dans un piège: les princes vont nous revenir les mêmes que lorsqu'ils nous ont quittés.'

"Le roi nous fut bientôt annoncé; les affaires se pressaient les unes sur les autres de telle sorte qu'à peine l'insuccès de M. de Liancourt put effleurer l'attention. Il fallait, toutefois, qu'il eût donné beaucoup à penser à M. de Talleyrand, car il n'en parlait à personne."

monarchy, but who had been so mixed up with persons of all parties and opinions, as to know all and have friends amongst all. In such a party he saw a centre at which divergent lines might meet —a back bone, to which might be attached the scattered members of the great and varied society out of which a new government had to be constructed. The project was not a bad one, and it is probable that during the first days of an uncertain triumph it would have succeeded.

But the unexpected popularity of his family, the general acceptance of the "white cockade," the reports of his brother and the ardent Royalists, which did not fail to reach him with suitable exaggerations, and the positive abdication of Napoleon, created a new phase in Louis's affairs, and hesitating what to do, he determined on doing nothing till he arrived in France.

This was sufficient to show M. de Talleyrand, who did not subsequently forget M. de Blacas, that there would be a court circle in the new reign from which he should be excluded; that the King neither meant to confide in him nor to offend him; that a system was not to be formed; that if he did not break with the sovereign on whose head he had a few days previously placed a crown,

he must compromise with that sovereign's prejudices and favourites. There were not as yet sufficient motives for a rupture. Circumstances would shortly develope themselves, and give many opportunities for a decided course. In the meantime a policy of principle was to be sacrificed to a policy of dexterity.

Had he been consulted, he would certainly not have counselled Louis XVIII., who made a sort of triumphal entry into London on the 20th, to have said he owed his crown to the Prince Regent; putting aside the Emperor Alexander, who was still in Paris, and the Senate and the Assembly, which were the only constituted organs at that time of the nation's wishes, and the only authority which the French army and the French people would so easily have obeyed. But he met his Majesty at Compiègne, where Louis had determined to stay three or four days before entering Paris and fixing his ultimate resolves. The meeting would have been curious to witness.

Both personages were perfect actors in their way, and each with a pretension to superiority, was determined not to be subalternised by the other. Louis had acted the part of king for some years with the more care and punctiliousness because he was only

king in name. Talleyrand had been accustomed from his youth to the highest positions in society; in later years he had been admitted into the intimacy of sovereigns, and been treated by them, if not on a footing of equality, with the highest respect; and he had just disposed of the fortunes of France. The descendant of kings meant to impose the sovereign on his powerful subject at once, with the airs of royalty for which he was famous. The bishop, noble, and diplomatist, was prepared to encounter these airs by the respectful well-bred nonchalance of a man of the world, who knew his own value; and the natural but not obsequious deference of a great minister to a constitutional monarch. Neither probably said what he intended to say, or what contemporaries have said for them; but it is reported that Louis gave M. de Talleyrand to understand that, in remaining tranquil and contented until Providence had placed the crown on his head, he had played the proper part of the prince and the philosopher, acting with far more dignity and wisdom than the bustling men of action who had been occupied during this time with their own advancement.

On the other hand, when his Majesty, wishing perhaps to efface the impression of observations

that were not altogether complimentary, spoke in admiration of M. de Talleyrand's abilities, and asked him how he had contrived, first to overturn the Directory, and finally Bonaparte, M. de Talleyrand has the credit of having replied with a sort of naïveté which, when it suited him, he could well assume:

"Really, sire, I have done nothing for this: there is something inexplicable about me which brings ill luck on the governments that neglect me."*

Finally, as to essentials, the King appears, without entering much into details, to have given M. de Talleyrand to understand that France would have a constitution, and M. de Talleyrand the administration of foreign affairs.

This was all that M. de Talleyrand now expected.

Nevertheless he tried, on a subsequent occasion, to persuade the legitimate monarch that his throne would acquire increased solidity by being accepted as the spontaneous gift of the nation.

A really great man in Louis's place would pro-

* "Mon Dieu, sire, je n'ai rien fait pour cela. C'est quelque chose d'inexplicable que j'ai en moi et qui porte malheur aux gouvernements qui me négligent."

bably have provoked a vote by universal suffrage; the mere fact of appealing to such a vote would have obtained a universal assent, springing from a universal enthusiasm; and, in fact, such a vote for a king who had legitimacy in his favour would at the same time have renewed the vigour of the legitimist principle.

A very prudent man would not have run this risk; he would have made the most of the vote of the Senate, since it was given, and taken for granted that it was a vote in favour of his race as well as of himself.

A vain and proud man, however, could not so easily divest himself of a peculiar quality which only he possessed. Any man might be chosen king of the French, but Louis XVIII. alone could be the legitimate King of France. This hereditary right to the throne was a personal property. He had claimed it in exile: he was resolved to assert it in power, and when M. de Talleyrand was for continuing the argument, he cut him short, according to contemporaneous authorities, by observing with a courteous but somewhat cynicals mile:

"You wish me to accept a constitution from you, and you don't wish to accept a constitution from me. This is very natural; mais, mon

cher M. de Talleyrand, alors moi je serai debout, et vous assis." *

V.

The observation just quoted admitted of no reply. Still Louis had the good sense to see that he could not enter Paris without some explanations, and the promise, more or less explicitly given, of a representative government. Unlike the Comte d'Artois he felt no sort of difficulty about giving this promise, and was even willing to concert with his minister as to the most popular manner in which he could give the guarantees he intended to offer without abandoning the point on which he resolved to insist.

The first thing, however, to provide for, was a meeting between the sovereign who had taken the crown as a right, and the Senate who had offered it on conditions.

This meeting took place on the 1st of May at Saint-Ouen, a small village near Paris, where the King invited the Senate to meet him. M. de Talleyrand, on presenting this body, pronounced a speech,

* "But then, my dear M. de Talleyrand, I should be standing, and you seated."

composed with much art, and spoke for both parties. He said that the nation, enlightened by experience, rushed forward to salute the sovereign returning to the throne of his ancestors; that the Senate, participating in the sentiments of the nation, did the same; that, on the other hand, the monarch, guided by his wisdom, was about to give France institutions in conformity with its intelligence, and the ideas of the epoch: that a constitutional "Charter" (a title the King had selected) would unite every interest to that of the throne, and fortify the royal will by the concurrence of all wills; that no one knew better than his Majesty the value of institutions for a long time tried happily by a neighbouring people, and furnishing aid and not opposition to all kings who loved the laws, and were the fathers of their people.

A few words from the King, confirming what M. de Talleyrand had said, left nothing to be desired; and on the 3rd of May was published the famous declaration of Saint-Ouen, which, after stating that much that was good in the constitution proposed by the Senate on the 6th of April would be preserved, added that some articles in it bore signs, notwithstanding, of the haste with which they had necessarily been written, and must con-

sequently be reformed; but that his Majesty had the full intention to give to France a constitution, that should contain all the liberties that Frenchmen could desire, and that the project of such a constitution would ere long be presented to the chambers.

Louis XVIII., thus preceded, entered Paris amidst a tolerable degree of enthusiasm, and, seating himself in the palace of his ancestors, began to prepare his existence there.

His first thought was to reconstitute his household, and, in doing this, M. de Talleyrand-Périgord was named grand aumonier. The new ministry was next to be formed, and M. de Talleyrand figured as minister of foreign affairs; and was honoured with the title of prince, though he could no longer add to it—of Benevent.

The other persons named in the new ministry, and who afterwards attracted notice, were the Abbé de Montesquieu, minister of the interior, a gentleman of learning and talent, but wholly unused to affairs, and a Royalist as much from prejudice as from principle (M. Guizot, by the way, commenced his career under M. de Montesquieu); and the Abbé Louis, minister of finance, whose financial abilities were universally acknowledged.

But the most important minister for the moment was the minister of the household, "that certain M. de Blacas," of whose influence over Louis XVIII. M. de Talleyrand had been early informed.

M. de Blacas was one of those gentlemen of the second order of nobility, who often produce on the vulgar a stronger effect as a grand seigneur than nobles of the first class, because they add a little acting to the natural dignity usually attendant upon persons who have been treated from their infancy with distinction. He was middle-aged, good-looking, courteous, a good scholar, a great collector of medals, very vain of his court favour, which was based on his long knowledge of all the moral and physical weaknesses of his master, and with an entire confidence in the indestructibility of an edifice which he had seen, notwithstanding, raised from the ashes.

He had, also, such a confidence in his own capacity. that he conceived it impossible for any one but an egregious fool, or a malignant personal enemy, to doubt it.

He concentrated in his hands the King's resolutions on all affairs, except foreign affairs, which M. de Talleyrand managed directly with his Majesty.

A government was thus formed, and the first duty of that government was to make a treaty of peace with the victorious powers. M. de Talleyrand had, necessarily, the conduct of this negotiation. There were two questions at issue: the one, the arrangements between the European potentates who had to give possessors to the territories they had taken from France; and the other, the arrangements to be made between France and these potentates.

Some persons thought it would be possible to deal with the two questions together, and that France could be admitted into a congress where the special questions of France with Europe, and the questions that had to be decided by the European sovereigns between themselves, could be settled simultaneously.*

But a little consideration will, I think, show that the questions between France and Europe, and the questions between the different States of Europe, which had been in hostility with France, were perfectly distinct.

It would also have been absurd, and consequently impossible, for France to have exacted, that all the matters that had to be arranged as

* M. Thiers is of this opinion.

resulting from the late war with France, should be treated in France.

The capital of France was the proper place for treating as to French interests.

The capital of one of the allies was the place where the affairs between the allies were naturally to be discussed. Paris was chosen in the first case, Vienna in the second.

The allies, however, had undoubtedly placed themselves in a false position towards the French nation, and this was felt when a peace with it had to be concluded.

They had declared that they separated Napoleon from France, that they only made war against the French ruler, and that they would give the country better conditions than they would give the Emperor. M. de Talleyrand, therefore, came forward, saying, "Well, you were going to give Napoleon the old limits of the French monarchy, what will you give France?"

The allies replied, as it was certain they would reply, that the promises alluded to were vague, they could not dispose of the property of others; that France had nothing legitimate but that which she held before a predatory succession of conquests; that the allies held, it was true, the

conquered territories recovered from the French, but that they could not give them back to wrongful acquirers; that the general understanding was, that France should have its ancient limits, and that when the allies had agreed on the 23rd of April to withdraw their troops from the French territory, it had been understood that this was the territory of ancient France. Anything more was out of the question. M. de Talleyrand, however, obtained the frontier of 1792, and not that of 1790, and in rounding that frontier, added some fortresses and inhabitants to the kingdom of Louis XVI. Moreover, Paris remained the mistress, and was permitted to boast of remaining the mistress, of all the works of art ravished from other nations, being thus, in fact, constituted the artistic capital of the world.

Such a limited result, however, did not satisfy the French people with peace when the horrors of war were over; and we find in various works concerning these times comments on the inconceivable *légèreté* of M. de Talleyrand, in not procuring more advantageous conditions.

I confess that I think that Europe should never have made compromising promises; and that she should have fulfilled generously what-

ever promises she had made; but upon the whole France, which in her conquests had despoiled every power, ought to have been satisfied when, in the returning tide of victory, those powers left her what she had originally possessed.

Poor M. de Talleyrand! he carried off all the absurd reproaches he had to encounter with a dignified indifference: even the accusation which was now made against him, of having signed the treaty of April, in which the provisional government, not being able to hold the fortresses still occupied by French troops out of France, with a foreign army demanding them in the heart of Paris, resigned them on the condition that France itself should be evacuated. "You seem to have been in a great hurry, M. de Talleyrand," said the Duc de Berry, "to sign that unhappy treaty." "Alas, yes, monseigneur; I was in a great hurry. There are senators who say I was in a great hurry to get the crown offered to your Royal house; a crown which it might otherwise not have got. You observe, monseigneur, that I was in a great hurry to give up fortresses which we could not possibly have kept. Alas, yes, monseigneur, I was in a great

hurry. But do you know, monseigneur, what would have happened if I had waited to propose Louis XVIII. to the allies, and had refused to sign the treaty of the 23rd of April with them? No; you don't know what would have happened! No more do I. But at all events you may rest assured, we should not now be disputing as to an act of the prince, your father."

Again, when a little after this the son of Charles X. was boasting of what France would do when she got the three hundred thousand troops that had been locked up in Germany, Talleyrand, who had been seated at some little distance and apparently not listening, got up, and approaching slowly the Duc de Berry, said, with half-shut eyes and a doubtful look of inquiry, "And do you really think, monseigneur, that these three hundred thousand men can be of any use to us?" "Of use to us! to be sure they will." "Hem!" said M. de Talleyrand, fixing the Duc, "you really think so, monseigneur? I did not know; for we shall get them from that unfortunate treaty of the 23rd of April!"

The best of it was that Charles X. had thought this treaty the great act of his life, until his son said it was a great mistake; and he did not know

then whether he should defend it in his own glorification, or throw all the blame of it on M. de Talleyrand.

VI.

The next link in the chain of events,—a final treaty of peace between France and Europe having been concluded (on the 30th of May),—was the promulgation of the long-promised constitution; for the sovereigns who were still in Paris, and with whom the Restoration had commenced, were anxious to leave it; and they said that they could not do so until the promises they had made to the French nation were fulfilled.

The 4th of June, therefore, was fixed for this national act.

The King had promised, as it has been seen, that the frame of a constitution should be submitted to the Senate and the legislative body.

He appointed the Abbé Montesquieu, whom we have already named, and a M. Ferrand, a person of some consideration with the Royalist party, to sketch the outline of this great work, assisted by M. de Beugnot, an accomplished gentleman, not very particular in his principles, but very adroit in

his phraseology; when done, such sketch was submitted to and approved by the King, and passed on to two commissions, one chosen from the Senate and the other from the legislative body, the King reserving to himself the right of settling disputed points.

The result was generally satisfactory, for though the constitution was so framed as to give it the air of being a grant from the royal authority, it contained the most essential principles of a representative government.

Equality before the law, and in the distribution of taxation, the admissibility of all to public employments, the inviolability of the monarch, the responsibility of ministers, the freedom of religion, the necessity of annual budgets; and, finally, Frenchmen were allowed to print and publish their opinions, subject to laws which were to repress the abuse of such liberty.

There was to be a lower chamber with the qualification for the electors of the payment of three hundred francs, direct taxes; and, for the eligible, of one thousand francs.

The upper chamber was not then made hereditary, though the King might give an hereditary peerage. A great portion of the Senate, the dukes

and peers before the Revolution, and other persons of distinction, formed the house of peers. The legislative body was to act as the lower chamber until the time for which the members had been chosen was expired. The senators, not carried on into the peerage, were allowed their former treatment as a pension.

The King bargained that the new constitution should be called "Charte Constitutionnelle": "Charte" being an old word that the kings had formerly employed, and that it should be dated in *the nineteenth* year of his reign.

The preamble also stated that "the King, in entire possession of his full rights over this beautiful kingdom, only desires to exercise the authority he holds from God and his ancestors, in fixing himself the bounds of his own power." A phrase which somewhat resembles one in "Bolingbroke," who says: "The infinite power of God is limited by his infinite wisdom."

It cannot be affirmed that M. de Talleyrand had anything to do with the framing of "the Charter," since Louis XVIII.'s instruction to the commissioners was to keep everything secret from M. de Talleyrand; but it was the sort of constitution he had insisted upon: and thus the Restoration was

accomplished according to the plan which he had undertaken to give to it, when he obtained the decrees which deposed the Bonapartes and recalled the Bourbons.

VII.

I have said that when M. de Talleyrand created the government of Louis XVIII., he wanted to give it a back-bone, consisting of a party of able, practical, and popular men of moderate opinions. But Louis XVIII., as a principle, distrusted all men in proportion to their popularity and ability, his ministers especially. M. de Talleyrand, therefore, was, in his eyes, a person who should be constantly watched, and constantly suspected. Louis XVIII. had also in horror the idea of his cabinet being—a ministry, a compact body agreeing together. His notion as to driving was that horses, who were always kicking at each other, were less likely to kick at the carriage; furthermore, he considered that everything which was not as it had been thirty years ago was really wrong, though he did not mean to take the trouble of changing it, and that all this new set of persons he had to deal with were *coquins*—not a gentleman

amongst them. That it was proper manners, since they existed, to treat them courteously, and proper policy, since they had a certain power in their hands, to temporise with them; but in his heart of hearts he looked upon them as yahoos, who had got into the stalls of horses, and were to be kicked out directly the horses, strengthened by plentiful feeds of corn, were up to the enterprise. In the meantime nothing was to be risked, so that he sat himself down as comfortably as he could in his arm-chair, received all visitors with an air which an actor, about to play Louis XIV., might have done well to study; wrote pretty billets, said sharp and acute things, and felt that he was every inch —a king.

Such was the sovereign of France; but there was also another demi-sovereign, who was to be found in the Pavillon Marsan, inhabited by the Comte d'Artois.

I esteem that prince, whom it has been the fashion to decry, more in some respects than I do his brother; for, though he had not a superior intelligence, he had a heart. He really wished well to his country: he would have laid down his life for it, at least he thought he would: his intentions were excellent; but he relied on his old notions

and education for the means of carrying them out.

Louis XVIII. was more cultivated, more cynical, more false: he loved France vaguely, as connected with his own pride and the pride of his race: he thought ill of the world, but was disposed to extract the most he could from it towards his own comfort, dignity, and prosperity. This character was not amiable, but its coldness and hardness rendered its possessor more secure against being duped, though not against being flattered.

The Comte d'Artois was both flattered and duped; but it was by addressing themselves to his better qualities that his flatterers duped him. They depicted the French people as eminently and naturally loyal: full of sympathy and respect for the descendants of Henry IV. and Louis XIV. "Poor children! they had been led away by having bad men placed over them in the different functions of the State: all that was necessary was to place good men, loyal men, men who had served the royal family even in exile—men, in short, who could be relied upon, in the public employments. The church, too—that great instrument of government, and that great source of comfort and contentment to men—that guardian of the mind which

prevents its emotions from wandering into the regions of false theories and hopes—had been treated with contempt and indifference. The church and the throne were required to aid each other—the Bourbons had to bring them into harmony. On these conditions, and on these conditions alone—conditions (so said all whom the Comte d'Artois consulted) so clear, so simple, so pious, and so just—the safety and prosperity of the monarchy depended."

The whole mistake consisted in considering the French a people that they were not, and ignoring what they were, and in fancying that a few prefects and priests could suddenly convert a whole generation from one set of ideas to another. But the Comte d'Artois' doctrines were pleasing to Louis XVIII., though he did not quite believe in them, and still more pleasing to all the friends or favourites who enjoyed his intimacy.

Thus, though they had not the support of his convictions, they influenced his conduct; which, however, never being altogether what Monsieur and his party required, was always watched by them with suspicion, and frequently opposed with obstinacy.

Where, then, could M. de Talleyrand turn for aid to maintain the government at the head of

which he figured? To the King? he had not his confidence. To his colleagues? they did not confide in each other. To the Comte d'Artois? he was in opposition to his brother. To the Royalists? they wanted absolute possession of power. The Imperialists and Republicans were out of the question. Moreover, he was not a man who could create, stimulate, command. To understand a situation and to bring to bear not unwilling assistants on its immediate solution, to collect the scattered influences about him, and direct them to a point at which it was their own interest to arrive; this was his peculiar talent. But to sustain a long and protracted conflict, to overawe and govern opposing parties; this was beyond the colder temperament of his faculties.

His only parliamentary effort then was an exposition in the chamber of peers of the state of the finances, which exposition was as clear and able as his financial statements always were. For the rest, he trusted partly to chance, partly to the ordinary and natural workings of a constitutional system, which was sure in time to produce parties with opinions, and even ministers, who, in their common defence, would be obliged to adopt a common policy and line of conduct. Thus, shrugging up

his shoulders at M. de Fontanes' declaration that he could not feel free where the press was so, and smiling at Madame de Simiane's notions as to a minister, who, according to her and the ladies of the Faubourg St. Germain, should be a grand seigneur, with perfect manners and a great name, who had hard-working men with spectacles under them, called *bouleux*,* to do their business—he hastened his preparations for joining the congress at Vienna, which was to have commenced its sittings two months after the treaty of Paris, that is, on the 30th of July, but which had not met in the middle of September.

VIII.

I have said that the congress was to commence on the 30th of July, but it was not till the 25th of September that the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, and the other kings and ministers of the different courts who were expected there, began to assemble. M. de Metternich, Lord Castlereagh,

* "Madame de Simiane reprit: 'Il ne s'agit pas de cela; c'était bon du temps de Bonaparte; aujourd'hui il faut mettre dans les ministères des gens de qualité et qui ont à leurs ordres des bons travailleurs qui font les affaires, ce qu'on appele des *bouleux*.'"—*Mémoires de Beugnot*, p. 142.

afterwards succeeded by the Duke of Wellington, the Prince Hardenberg, the Count Nesselrode, though only as second to the Emperor Alexander himself, who was his own negotiator, were the principal persons with whom M. de Talleyrand was associated.

His task was not an easy one. His sovereign owed his crown to those whose interests had now to be decided; he might himself be considered under obligations to them. It required a strong sense of a high position not to sink into a subordinate one. M. de Talleyrand had this, and sat himself down at Vienna with the air of being the ambassador of the greatest king in the world.

He was accompanied by persons with names more or less distinguished. The Duc Dalberg, the Comte Alexis de Noailles, M. de la Bernadière, and M. de Latour du Pin.

The first, M. de Talleyrand said, would let out secrets which he wished to be known; the second would report all he saw to the Comte d'Artois, and thus save that prince the trouble of having any one else to do so. As to M. de la Bernadière, he would keep the Chancellerie going, and M. de Latour du Pin would sign the passports.

The ideas he himself took under these circum-

stances to Vienna were,—to get France admitted into the congress on the same footing as other powers; to break up in some way or other the compactness of the confederation recently formed against her, and to procure friends from the body which was now a united enemy; to procure the expulsion of Murat from the throne of Naples, and lastly, to remove the Emperor of Elba to a more distant location (Bermuda, or the Azores were spoken of).

The dissolution of the alliance was the independence of France, however brought about. As for the expulsion of Murat from Naples, or the removal of Napoleon from Elba, these, no doubt, were great objects to the Bourbons in France; but it is possible that there were other grounds also which induced M. de Talleyrand to pursue them.

If Murat were removed from Naples, and Napoleon were in some place of security, and the elder branch of the Bourbons compromised itself in France, two other governments, according to circumstances, were still on the cards. The regency with the Duc de Reichstadt, or a limited monarchy with the Duc d'Orléans.

M. de Talleyrand had seen enough before he

went to Vienna, and probably heard enough since he had been there, to make him doubtful of the success of his first experiment: but his position was such that in any combination in France that had not the late Emperor Napoleon at its head, he would still be the person to whom a large party in and out of his own country would look for the solution of the difficulty which the downfall of Louis XVIII. would provoke.

The basis of the congress of Vienna was necessarily that furnished by the engagements which had already taken place between the allies at Breslau, Töplitz, Chaumont, and Paris; engagements which concerned the reconstruction of Prussia according to its proportions in 1806, the dissolution of the Rhenan Confederation; the re-establishment of the House of Brunswick in Hanover; and arrangements, to which I shall presently allude, concerning the future position of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw.

As all that was to be distributed was a common spoil in the hands of the allies, they suggested that a committee of four, representing England, Austria, Prussia, and Russia, should first agree amongst themselves as to the partition; and that an understanding having been established between

these—the principal parties—this understanding should be communicated to the others; to France and Spain in particular;—whose objections would be heard.

Such an arrangement excluded France from any active part in the first decisions, which would evidently be sustained when the four allies had agreed upon them.

The tact and talent of M. de Talleyrand were displayed in getting this sentence reversed.

Taking advantage of the treaty of peace which France had already signed, he contended that there were no longer *allies*, but simply powers who were called upon, after a war which had created a new order of things in Europe, to consider and decide in what manner this new order of things could best be established for the common good, and with the best regard to the old rights existing before 1792, and the new rights which certain states had legitimately acquired in the long struggle which, with more or less continuity, had existed since that epoch.

With some difficulty he at last made these ideas prevail, and the committee of four was changed into a committee of eight, comprising all the signataries to the treaty of Paris: Austria, England,

Russia, Prussia, France, Spain, Portugal, and Sweden.

This first point gained, the second,—viz., a division amongst the allies, was to be brought about. Any precipitate effort to do this would have prevented its success. M. de Talleyrand waited until rival interests began to work with him.

Now Austria's great pre-occupation was to regain her old position in Italy, without diminishing that to which she pretended in Germany.

The views of Russia, or rather of the Emperor Alexander, were more complicated, and formed with a certain greatness of mind and generosity of sentiment, though always with that craft which mingled with the imperial chivalry.

I have just said that I should speak of the arrangements respecting the Duchy of Warsaw, which were contemplated during the war in the event of the allies being successful. It had been settled that this duchy—once delivered from the pretensions of Napoleon—should be divided between the three military powers, Austria, Prussia, and Russia.

But the Emperor of Russia now took a higher tone. The annihilation of Poland, he said, had been

a disgrace to Europe: he proposed to himself the task of collecting its scattered members, and reconstituting it with its own laws, religion, and constitution. It would be a pleasure to him to add to what he could otherwise re-assemble, the ancient Polish provinces under his dominion. Poland should live again with the Czar of Russia for its king. I doubt whether the Emperor Alexander did not overrate the gratitude he expected to awaken, and underrate the feeling existing among the Poles, not merely as to nationality, but as to national independence.

But his notion most assuredly was, that he should thus create as an *avant-garde* into Europe a powerful kingdom, capable of rapid improvement, and combining with a complete devotion to his family, all the enthusiasm of a people who again stood up amidst the nations of the world.

He argued, moreover, and not without reason, that a kingdom of Poland thus existing would inevitably ere long draw back to itself all those portions of alienated territory which were in the hands of the other co-partitioning powers, and that thus Russia would ere long dominate the whole of that kingdom which she had at one time condescended to divide.

This project was of course easily seen through in Prussia as well as in Austria; but Russia presumed that Austria would be satisfied with her Italian acquisitions. He saw, however, that Prussia required no common bribe. The bribe proposed was Saxony, and thus a secret engagement was entered into between the two northern courts; Russia promising to stand by Prussia's claims as to Saxony, and Prussia promising to support Russia's plans as to Poland.

With respect to England, she seemed more especially occupied with the idea of forming a united kingdom of Holland and Belgium, and beguiled by the delusion that you could unite by treaties populations which were disunited by sympathies, fancied she could create a barrier against French ambition where England was most concerned; and thus save us in future from those dangers by which we were menaced when the Scheldt was in Napoleon's possession, and the British coast was menaced by maritime arsenals, which confronted it from Brest to Antwerp.

The conflict which at once commenced had reference to the ambitious claims of Prussia and Russia.

The King of Saxony, though an ally of Napo-

leon, had been faithful to France, and there was a feeling in the French nation favourable to him. As to Poland, France, which has always taken a lively interest in Polish independence as a barrier against Russian aggrandisement, could not see with satisfaction an arrangement which was to make Poland an instrument of Russian power.

Our disposition as to Prussia was at first somewhat undecided. We did not approve of the destruction of Saxony, still we were not unwilling to see a strong state established in the north of Germany, if it was an independent state; and would therefore at first have allowed the addition of Saxony to the Prussian dominions, if Prussia would have joined with Great Britain and Austria against the Russian projects in Poland. Austria, on the other hand, was quite as much against the Prussian project as the Russian one; but Prince Metternich, being perfectly aware that Prussia would not separate herself from Russia, affected to fall into Lord Castlereagh's views, and agreed to sacrifice Saxony if Prussia would insist with ourselves on Polish independence.

Prussia, as Prince Metternich foresaw, refused this; and indeed took possession of Saxony, as

Russia did of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, assuming towards the other powers an attitude of defiance.

In the meantime the question of Saxony became popular with the English parliament and the English court: with the English parliament, which is always against the oppressor; and with the English court, which began to think that, when Prussia had once got Saxony, she might take a fancy to Hanover. Austria gladly perceived this change, and it was agreed that England and Austria should oppose themselves conjointly and distinctly to the intentions haughtily manifested by the two northern courts.

Thus England, Austria, and France found themselves linked together by common opinions. Still there were reasons why the two first powers hesitated as to connecting themselves with the third.

First, such a connection was what M. de Talleyrand desired—a rupture of that league by which the peace of Europe had been obtained; secondly, it was uncertain whether France could give Austria and England any practical aid; and lastly, it was doubtful whether she would not exact more for such aid, if she did give it, than it was worth, and aim at renewing all the ambitious designs which

the overthrow of Napoleon and the treaty of Paris had set at rest.

The first objection wore away as it became more and more evident that Prussia and Russia had already entered into separate and particular engagements, which rendered it not only justifiable but necessary for England and Austria, if they did not mean to submit servilely to the results of these engagements, to guard against them by counter engagements between themselves.

With respect to the power of France as an auxiliary, M. de Talleyrand, by an able exposition of the state of affairs at Vienna, induced the French government to display its military capacity by raising the French army from 130,000 to 200,000, and creating the facility for increasing it to a far more formidable amount—a measure which the extraordinary recovery of French finances under the able administration of M. Louis rendered easy, and which produced a considerable moral effect, both in France and out of it. At the same time the ambassador of France, in his numerous conversations with Lord Castlereagh and M. de Metternich, held this language:

"A government to last must be faithful to its origin. Bonaparte's was founded by conquest: he

was forced to continue conquering; that of Louis XVIII. is based on principle. To this principle it must adhere; it is the principle of legitimate right, which conquest, until confirmed by treaty, cannot effect. We support the King of Saxony. On this principle, we do not want to be paid for it. In supporting his throne, we guarantee our own. Do you doubt my sincerity? I will sign any paper you wish to tranquillize all suspicion as to Louis XVIII.'s ambition."

It was in this manner that he led by degrees to the signing of the secret treaty of 3rd of January, 1815, a treaty by which Austria, England, and France bound themselves to furnish each 150,000 men, to support any one of the three powers which might be attacked by other powers attempting forcibly to alter the equilibrium of Europe for their own advantage. The names of the powers suspected were not mentioned, and the compact entered into was essentially of a defensive character; but it was in sympathy with French feelings; it broke up the anti-French alliance, and gave to France the two most important allies she could hope to gain; for England alone had formed the late coalition, and without her a coalition could not be again formed.

M. Thiers, who is too prone to consider that all statesmanship consists in acquiring extensions of territory, objects to everything done by M. de Talleyrand, and considers that this diplomatist should have waited quietly, rather favouring Prussia and Russia, and that then these powers would have offered France Belgium or the frontiers of the Rhine, in which case Prussia and Russia would, he considers, have been more advantageous allies to France than England and Austria.

Now, of all ideas the one that seems the most extravagant to me is that Prussia, or even Russia, would have reseated France on the Rhine, or brought her back in any way nearer to Germany. I feel certain that under no circumstances was this likely. But, at all events, Prussia and Russia would only have made the strange proposal on which M. Thiers counts, at the last extremity.

They would have previously carried their negotiations with their late allies to the utmost limit; and as we were prepared to make many concessions and did indeed finally give up one-third of Saxony to Prussia, and as much of Poland as she could well digest to Russia, there is not the slightest probability that, for the remaining differences, Prussia and Russia would have purchased the aid

of France by a large increase of frontier and a deadly quarrel with Great Britain and Austria.

M. de Talleyrand then, in following the policy of M. Thiers, would, in the first place, have lost the opportunity which he more wisely seized of separating the great powers; he would also have ungenerously abandoned Saxony, and at the same time so disgusted England, that it would afterwards have been impossible to get an English parliament to vote a sixpence for sustaining the Bourbon cause. Waterloo would never have been fought; Russia and Prussia could have done little without English subsidies; and France would have been again delivered into the hands of Napoleon, whose triumph would have been M. de Talleyrand's own ruin; and the ruin of the master he then served.

As it is not my intention to enter into the general subject of the treaty of Vienna, which I have always considered alike defective in principle and policy, I shall not follow the negotiations I have been alluding to further; though it may be as well, since I have spoken of Naples, to observe that M. de Talleyrand never obtained Prince Metternich's attention to the dethronement of Murat until the Prussian and Russian questions had been

settled by suitable arrangements; for Prince Metternich was too wise to have Germany and Italy on his back at once; when, however, these arrangements were completed, and the brother-in-law of Napoleon had compromised himself by intrigues, which had been watched but allowed to ripen, the Austrian statesman then gave the French ambassador a private but positive assurance that the Kingdom of Naples should shortly be restored to its old possessors.

As to the question of a change of residence for Napoleon, that was decided, just as the congress was closing, by Napleon himself; who, not ignorant of the plans that were maturing for his removal from a position wherein nothing but the most absurd want of consideration could ever have placed him, engaged in that audacious enterprise, the most glorious, though the most fatal, in his meteor-like career.

IX.

It was in the midst of the gaieties of a ball on the 5th of March,* and just as the congress was about to separate, that from a small group of sovereigns collected together in a corner of the salon, and betraying the seriousness of their conversation by the gloom of their countenances, there came forth as a sort of general murmur:

"Bonaparte has escaped from Elba." Prince Metternich was the only person who at once divined that the ex-Emperor's intentions were to march at once on Paris. The success of so bold an adventure was, of course, doubtful; but in the hope there might still be time to influence public opinion, a proclamation, proposed (at the instigation of the Duke of Wellington) by Austria, and signed 13th March by France and the four great powers, denounced the ex-Emperor of Elba in language only applicable to a pirate or a freebooter: a language that Louis XVIII. had used at Paris on the 6th of March, and might use with some propriety,

* So many and such different accounts are given of the time and manner in which this news arrived, that I merely give the popular, without answering for its being the accurate, one.

but which came far less decorously from princes who had not very long previously treated this pirate and freebooter as "the king of kings," and were unsuitable to the lips of a sovereign who was speaking of the husband of his favourite daughter.

People, however, often cover a hesitation in their decisions by an extravagance in their attitude.

The idea of a new war was popular with no one; the different powers, moreover, represented at Vienna, were no longer on the same cordial terms of fraternity that had distinguished their relations at Paris; they felt notwithstanding, that, in the face of a common danger they must compromise themselves with each other, and, by an effort over their minor rivalries and animosities, show themselves determined on the deadly combat, which alone could, if successful, repair the effects of their imprudence and save the honour of their arms.

Shortly came the news of that glorious and soul-stirring march through legions who, commanded to point their bayonets at the breast of their old commander as a traitor, wept at his knees as a father; but this great historical romance rather strengthened than weakened the resolves that had previously been formed; and the procla-

mation of the 13th of March was soon succeeded by the treaty of the 25th.

This treaty, to which the four allied powers were the only principal parties, was a revival of the treaty of Chaumont and the treaty of Paris. The position of the Bourbons was not clearly defined; for though Louis XVIII. was invited to be a party to it, the allies, and England in particular, expressly declared that they did not attempt to impose a government on France, nor bind themselves to support the claims of the fugitive monarch. I say "fugitive monarch" because Louis XVIII. had by this time tested the value of his adherents, and was settling down quietly at Ghent; Napoleon being as quietly re-established in the Tuileries.

The secret of all that had occurred is to be stated in a few words.

Louis XVIII. had not gained the affections of the French nation; his predecessor had retained the affections of the French army. There was little mystery in the intrigues of the Bonapartes. The Queen Hortense (Comtesse de St. Leu) resided at Paris, and the conversation of her drawing-room was a constant conspiracy, whilst the correspondence she received was the confidence of half the capital. Barras and Fouché both informed

M. de Blacas of much that was going on, and offered to give him more detailed information; but that gentleman's horizon was limited, and what he did not see, he did not believe. Moreover, the Royalists conceived that the most christian king had gained the consciences of the military by naming an *aumonier*, with the rank of captain, to each regiment, and had the provinces in his hands, because he had placed them in those of functionaries who professed hatred to "the usurper." "What had they to fear?" Thus, the country which had been fatigued with the soldier and the drum, was teased by the mass and the *émigré*. And, in the meantime, the veterans of the great army, who saw themselves replaced by a guard of young gentlemen with good names and splendid uniforms and the beauties of the Empire, who found themselves out of fashion amongst the great ladies of the legitimate court, were at the two ends of the electric wire, which had only to be touched by the little man in the grey great-coat, in order to vibrate through the heart of every soldier who had ever followed the imperial eagle, and still kept the tricolour cockade in his writing-desk or his knapsack.

X.

The conduct of M. de Talleyrand at Vienna had been that which he always followed to any government that he served and that trusted him—zealous and faithful. He had, in short, been an active and able agent, carrying out the policy which Louis XVIII., with whom he kept up a private correspondence, thought the best for his dynasty and for France; and he had succeeded in giving both dignity and influence to a government which in reality wanted both. He had not during his foreign mission meddled with the internal policy of the court, nor relaxed in his endeavours to serve it on account of the faults it committed: but to his intimate friends he had made no secret of his belief that it was taking a road which would probably lead to ruin. When it had arrived at that goal the case was different. He did not separate himself from it—but he did not link himself indissolubly with it. He showed no hesitation, however, as to declaring against its opponent. Concentrating himself indeed on the one idea of getting rid of Napoleon, he repeated constantly to those who expatiated on the deficiency of the Restoration, "I

don't know what government may be the best for France, but I do know that Napoleon's is the worst."

His old master would willingly have softened this animosity; and Fouché, who was intriguing with all parties, with the intention of choosing the most powerful, sent M. de Montrond to Vienna to learn what he could, as to the real intentions of the alliance, and more especially as to the intentions of M. de Talleyrand, whose services M. de Montrond was to endeavour, by any assurances he might judge necessary, to obtain.

This M. de Montrond was a specialty of his epoch: a type of that French *roué* whom Faublas, and more particularly the "*liaisons dangereuses*," had produced. He had ruled the world of fashion by his loves, his duels, and his wit, which was superior to any man's, for nearly forty years. He was one of M. de Talleyrand's pets, as M. de Talleyrand was one of his admirations. Each spoke ill of the other, for each said he loved the other for his vices. But no one could speak to M. de Talleyrand with so much intimacy as M. de Montrond, nor obtain from him so clear an answer. For they trusted each other, though M. de Montrond would never have told any one else

to trust M. de Talleyrand, nor M. de Talleyrand told any one else to trust M. de Montrond.

This singular diplomatist, the soul of Queen Hortense's circle, and at the same time the friend and protégé of the Duc d'Orléans, whom he had known in Sicily, to which island he had exiled himself in one of Napoleon's fits of ill-humour—(not as it was thought without an object)—first tried to see if any consideration could bring the former member of the Empire back to his old allegiance: and, on finding this impossible, sounded, it is said, the old *habitué* of the Palais Royal as to his feelings towards the son of its old proprietor; finally obtained for answer that the prince had claims to which the door was not then open, but, should it ever be open, there was no necessity for shutting it with vehemence.

This lukewarm fidelity was not precisely of the temperature that suited the loyalty of Ghent: where some people commonly thought that it would not have been difficult to have induced the allies to have been more positive and explicit in favour of the legitimate monarch, if his representative had been more zealous as to his rights and less sensible as to his errors. Whilst the party of the Comte d'Artois, instead of repenting of the excess

to which it had carried its principles, and recognizing that this excess had been the cause of its overthrow—thought, or at least *said*, as is usual in such cases, that its failure was solely attributable to the checks its policy had encountered, and that if it had been allowed fully and freely its own way, the misfortune which all deplored would never have occurred.

XI.

M. de Talleyrand, then, was more or less in discredit with the politicians, who were already disputing about the redistribution of the places that their mistakes had just lost; and, bearing this disgrace with his usual supercilious negligence, was in no great hurry to appear amongst them, but taking it for granted that his health required the waters of Carlsbad, repaired there, observing, that a diplomatist's first duty after a congress was to take care of his liver.

In the meantime the hundred days which concentrated so much of the past, present, and future, were rushing rapidly on. I know no example that teaches us more clearly that our intellect is governed by our character, than the conduct of

Napoleon during these hundred days. None saw more clearly than himself that there were but two parts for him to play in them. The one to appear before the French as the great captain who came to free them from a yoke imposed by the foreigner; and to refuse any other title than that of their general until a peace was established or a victory gained, and then to leave it to the nation to accord to him the place and the title which it might deem the best for the public advantage; the other, to seize the full powers of dictator, and to sustain them by his prestige over the military and the masses—to arm and revolutionize France, and to be himself the representative of that armed revolution. But he loved the title and decorations of sovereignty, and could not compel himself to descend from the emperor to the soldier. Neither could he persuade himself to call to life those elements of force in which he saw the elements of disorder, nor condescend to be the chief of the mob even with the title of majesty. He temporised, therefore, for the moment with those with whom he had the least sympathy, and from whom he could get the least assistance; I mean the Constitutionalists, who, representing the middle order and the thinking portion of the French people,

formed a party, that with a regular government, and at an ordinary time, and under a sovereign they could have trusted, might have possessed considerable influence; but such a party, with a government created by the sword, at the moment of a crisis, under a ruler of whom they were suspicious, could only embarrass Napoleon's action, and could not add to his authority.

The conditions, then, under which this marvellous being fought for the last time for empire were impossible. He had not in his character the elements of a revolutionary leader; and he was not allowed to use the qualities, with which nature had endowed him, of a great captain and despotic chief.

His cool head, his incomparable energy, gave something like character and system to his own military proceedings, but all beyond them was confusion. A great battle was to be safety or ruin. He fought it, and was vanquished; but he had fought it with skill and courage against foreign invaders; and I confess that my heart, though an English one, beats in sympathy for him, as he quitted the field where he left so many of his devoted followers, and prescient of the fate which awaited him, sought a city which never tolerates the unfortunate.

Would for England's honour that his destiny had closed on that memorable field, and that we had not to inscribe on the same page of our history the captivity of St. Helena and the victory of Waterloo!

XII.

To return to Ghent, the ex-King, irritated and perplexed by the prolonged absence of his minister, not satisfied with that of the Duc d'Orléans, who had retired to England, and harassed by the zeal of Monsieur, had conducted himself, notwithstanding, with dignity and ability; and, by a sort of representation about his person, a continued correspondence with France, and a confident attachment on the part of his adherents, kept up a certain prestige in his favour.

Nothing, however, had at first been positively decided concerning him, for M. de Metternich carried on, for a time, a secret negotiation with Fouché, in which he offered—if that false and wily man could procure Napoleon's abdication or deposition—to support the claims of either the Duc d'Orléans or Marie-Louise: a proposition which, as long as its success was uncertain, could not but

affect considerably the state of M. de Talleyrand's liver.

This negotiation once broken off, Louis's claims made a great advance, since the allied sovereigns were strongly persuaded that on entering France they must have some national party in their favour.

There were certain indications likewise in France itself, serving to show men who watched the inclination of the many straws that were then in the air, that these were being blown back towards the old monarchy; and when Louis XVIII. saw that the list of Bonaparte's senators did not contain the name of M. de Semonville, he considered his return pretty secure.

The same conviction arrived about the same time at Carlsbad, where the noble invalid began to think that he ought no longer to delay a personal account of the services he had rendered at Vienna.

His arrival at Ghent was not, however, particularly agreeable there, since he came as the decided enemy of the now celebrated M. de Blacas, to whom he was determined to attribute nearly all the errors which the King had committed.

In fact, M. de Talleyrand's disgrace was determined on; and, as he was rarely the last to know

what concerned himself, when he waited on Louis XVIII. the day after the battle of Waterloo, it was to request his gracious permission to continue his cure at Carlsbad; nor was his Majesty so ill-natured as to reply otherwise than by saying: "Certainly, M. de Talleyrand, I hear those waters are excellent."

Nothing could equal the amiable and contented mien with which M. de Talleyrand limped from King Louis's presence after this considerate reply; and, eating an excellent dinner that evening with the mayor of Mons, was never known, says one of the guests, to be more gay, witty, or agreeable, observing to one or two of his intimate friends, what a pleasure it was to find that he had no longer to disturb himself about the affairs of a clique which it was impossible to serve and to please.

But, as it happened, the Comte d'Artois, who hated M. de Talleyrand as a liberal, hated M. de Blacas still more as a favourite; and Louis XVIII. finding that, whatever happened to M. de Talleyrand, M. de Blacas would not be kept, and that he must either be the tool of his brother, or obtain a protector in his minister, preferred, on the whole, the latter situation.

The Duke of Wellington, moreover, who, since

the secret treaty at Vienna, considered the French negotiator there as linked with the policy of England, told Louis that if he wished for the influence of our government, he must have a man at the head of his own whom we could confide in.

M. Guizot, likewise, who, though young in affairs had already much consideration, and who spoke in the name of the constitutional Legitimists, had already said that, to have the support of this small but respectable party, a cabinet must be formed with M. de Talleyrand at its head; and thus, on those second thoughts which come to us often when we have been a little too hasty and bold in listening to our first, M. de Talleyrand received the order to join the King at Cambrai the day after he had been allowed to proceed to Carlsbad.

M. de Talleyrand was, however, not only mortified by the treatment he had received, but foresaw that he had only such treatment eventually to expect, and was determined to prefer the first recommendation to the subsequent command.

There are many, however, anxious that a statesman from whom they expect favours should not abjure office; and, finally, the man of the first Resto-

ration, his pride being satisfied by a general appeal to his patriotism, agreed to appear again as the minister of a second.

Still, in coming to this determination, M. de Talleyrand adopted another. He had frequently, it is said, blamed himself for having in 1814 allowed the sovereign, who could not have done without him, to assume too absolute an authority over him. He did not now expect to be at the head of the French Government long, but he deemed that his only chance of remaining there, or of doing any good whilst he was there, was to show an indifference to office, and a consciousness of power.

He appeared, then, when summoned to his Majesty's council, with a sketch of a proclamation which he called upon the King to sign, and which was, in fact, a recognition of the errors of his Majesty's late reign.

As the conversation that took place on the reading of this proclamation is related by a witness, I give it as narrated, the more especially as it shows the position which M. de Talleyrand assumed, and the cool self-confidence with which he confronted the indignation of the whole Bourbon family.

* "The Council assembles: it was composed of MM. de Talleyrand, Dambray, de Feltre, de Fancourt, Beurnonville, and myself (M. de Beugnot is speaking).

"After a few words from M. de Talleyrand, explanatory of the subject which was to be brought before the Council, I commenced reading the proclamation, such as it remained after the corrections made in it; the King permitted me to read it to the end, and then, though not without some emotion that his face betrayed, told me to read it once more.

"Monsieur then spoke, and complained bitterly of the terms in which the proclamation was drawn up. 'The King,' he said, 'is made to ask pardon for the faults he committed. He is made to say that he allowed himself to be carried away by his

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* "Le Conseil s'assemble: il se composait de MM. de Talleyrand, Dambray, de Feltre, de Fancourt, Beurnonville, et moi.

"Après deux mots de M de Talleyrand sur ce dont le Roi a permis que le Conseil s'occupât, je commence la lecture du projet de la proclamation tel que les corrections l'avaient ajusté. Le Roi me laisse aller jusqu'au bout; puis, et non sans quelque émotion que trahit sa figure, m'ordonne de relire. Quand j'ai fini cette seconde lecture, Monsieur prend la parole; il se plaint avec vivacité des termes dans lesquels cette proclamation est rédigée. On y fait demander pardon au Roi des fautes qu'il a commises; on lui fait dire qu'il s'est laissé entraîner à ses affections, et promettre qu'il aura dans l'avenir une conduite toute différente. De

affections, and that for the future he will conduct himself differently. Such expressions can only do this mischief—lower royalty; for in all other respects they say too much or too little.'

"M. de Talleyrand replied: 'Monsieur will pardon me if I differ from him; I find these expressions necessary, and appropriately placed. The King has had faults, his affections have misled him. There is nothing too much in this paper.' 'Is it I?' said Monsieur, 'whom it is intended indirectly to point out?' 'Why, yes, since Monsieur has placed the discussion on that ground, Monsieur has done a great deal of harm.' 'The Prince de Talleyrand forgets himself.' 'I fear so, but truth carries me away.' The Duc de Berry, with the accent of anger painfully restrained: 'Nothing

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pareilles expressions n'ont qu'un tort, celui d'avilir la royanté; car du reste elles disent trop ou ne disent rien du tout. M. de Talleyrand répond:

"'Monsieur, pardonnera si je diffère de sentiments avec lui. Je trouve ces expressions nécéssaires, et pourtant bien placées; le Roi a fait des fautes; ses affections l'ont égaré; il n'y a rien là de trop.'

"'Est-ce moi,' reprend Monsieur, 'qu'on veut indirectement désigner?'

"'Oui, puisque Monsieur a placé la discussion sur ce terrain, Monsieur a fait beaucoup de mal.'

"'Le prince de Talleyrand s'oublie! . . . .'

"'Je le crains, mais la vérité m'emporte. . . . .'

"M. le Duc de Berry, *avec l'accent d'une colère péniblement contrainte:*

but the presence of the King would permit me to tolerate this treatment of my father before me, and I would like to know——' At these words, pronounced in a higher tone than the rest, the King made a sign to the Duc de Berry, and said, 'Enough, my nephew, I am the only person to judge of the propriety of what is said in my presence, and in my Council. Gentlemen, I neither approve of the terms of this proclamation, nor of the conversation to which it has given rise. The framer must retouch his work, not forgetting that when I speak, it must be with a due sense of my dignity and high position.' The Duc de Berry, pointing at me: 'But it is not he who has strung all this nonsense together.' The King: 'Forbear

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'Il ne faut rien moins que la présence du Roi pour que je permette à qui que ce soit de traiter ainsi mon père devant moi, et je voudrais bien savoir. . . . . '

"A ces mots, prononcés d'un ton encore plus élevé que le reste, le Roi fait signe à M. le Duc de Berry, et dit: 'Assez, mon neveu: c'est à moi seul *à faire justice* de ce qui se dit en ma présence et dans mon Conseil. Messieurs, je ne peux approuver ni les termes de la proclamation, ni la discussion dont elle a été le sujet. Le rédacteur retouchera son œuvre et ne perdra pas de vue les hautes convenances qu'il faut savoir garder quand on me fait parler.'

"M. le Duc de Berry, *en me désignant*: 'Mais ce n'est pas lui qui a enfilé toutes ces sottises là.'

"Le Roi: 'Mon neveu, cessez d'interrompre, s'il vous plaît. Messieurs,

interrupting, nephew, if you please. I repeat, gentlemen, that I have listened to this discussion with much regret. Let us turn to another subject.'"

XIII.

The proclamation with some slight alterations was published, and M. de Talleyrand finally carried his point, and formed his ministry. It is difficult to place oneself so completely in the troubled scene of Paris at this time, amidst the confused society composed of a defeated army, disappointed Republicans, triumphant Royalists, all uneasy and agitated in their actual position, and without the possibility of a common attachment to what was to be their government—it is difficult, I say, to take into a comprehensive glance the confused and troubled state of the French capital, disturbed by a thousand plots which might at any moment concentrate into one—and, therefore, it is difficult to appreciate the possible necessity of employing an

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je répète que j'ai entendu cette discussion avec beaucoup de regrets. Passons à un autre sujet. . . . .'"—*Mémoires du Comte Beugnot*, tom. ii. p. 274.

able and dexterous adventurer, who had pulled many of the cords of the machine which had now to be brought into harmonious working. Still, I venture to consider that the Duke of Wellington committed an error in recommending, and M. de Talleyrand an error in accepting, M. Fouché as a member of the cabinet about to be formed.

The late minister of police was, in fact, at this time, an acknowledged scoundrel; he had gained our favour by betraying his master's secrets to our general; he had gained the favour of the extreme Royalists by concealing their plots, and keeping safe their persons when he was serving the government they were attempting to overthrow. He had betrayed the Republicans of France to the Emperor of France, and he had subsequently betrayed the Emperor of France to the foreigner; and he had voted for the death of the brother of the monarch who was now to sit upon the throne. It was impossible for a man of this sort, whatever his abilities, not to bring ultimate disgrace on the government that enrolled him in its ranks; and, in fact, by his successive efforts, first to gain one party, and then to gain the other, by his personal ambition, by his constant intrigues, and by the general dis-

trust he inspired, he deprived his colleagues of the consideration of all honest men, and exposed them consequently to the attacks of all violent factions.

But if England committed a fault in approving of the appointment of the Duc d'Otrante, she committed another fault still more important.

In designating M. de Talleyrand as the man best calculated to establish a government in France, and to consolidate an alliance between France and England, we ought to have been prepared to render the position of that minister tenable and honourable. Whether rightly or wrongly, we, in common with the other four powers, had made war, for a second time, on precisely the same principles on which we had made it for the first; since we had made it with the same declaration, that our conflict was with a man, and not with a nation. Our second peace, therefore, ought to have been in strict conformity with our first, or, rather, our first treaty of peace should have been maintained. We were dealing with the same monarch under the same circumstances, and we ought to have done so, preserving the same conditions.

If new circumstances of importance,—circumstances we had not foreseen,—rendered a change

of policy necessary, that change should have been a large one, based on large considerations, and its necessity should have been clearly explained.

To take a few strips of territory, and a few pictures and statues, was the spite of the pigmy, not the anger of the giant.

The power which rendered itself most conspicuous by its want of generosity, was unfortunately the one which had been amongst the most conspicuous by its valour. The descendant of all the Capets was insulted by the dirty linen of the Prussian soldier being hung up to dry on the railing of his palace; and the supposed intention of the Prussian army to blow up the bridge of Jena would have been a reality but for M. de Talleyrand's timely precautions.

The story is recounted by a gentleman I have frequently cited in rather an amusing manner, and is characteristic of the subject of this memoir.

M. de Talleyrand, on hearing what the Prussians were about to do, and knowing in these occasions no time was to be lost, ordered M. de Beugnot to find Marshal Blücher wherever he might be, and to use the strongest language in his vocabulary on the part of the King and his government in order to induce the marshal to give such peremp-

tory orders as would prevent the threatened outrage. "Shall, I say," said M. de Beugnot, "that the King will have himself carried to the bridge, and be blown up with it?" "Not precisely; people will not believe us quite so heroic, but say something strong, very strong."

Off went M. de Beugnot to discover the marshal, who was easily to be found in a certain gambling house in the Palais Royal. Though by no means delighted at being disturbed in his only amusement, the marshal, on being assured that the name of the bridge was to be altered, gave the orders for stopping its destruction.

When M. de Beugnot returned, and gave an account of his mission, M. de Talleyrand said, good-humouredly, "Well, now I think that we may profit by your idea of this morning. You remember the King threatened to be carried to the bridge, and was prepared to be blown up with it. It will make a good newspaper article." "I profited," says Beugnot, "by the hint." The anecdote appeared in all the papers, and the King received the compliments made to him upon it with his accustomed affability and assurance.*

* "Mais, reprend vivement M. de Talleyrand, partez donc! Tandis que nous perdons le temps en allées et venues, et à disputer sur la com-

But this was not all. The violent seizure of the works of art which France had till then retained,

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pétence, le pont sautera! Annoncez-vous de la part du Roi de France et comme son ministre, dites les choses les plus fortes sur le chagrin qu'il éprouve.

"Voulez-vous que je dise que le Roi va se faire porter de sa personne sur le pont, pour sauter de compagnie si le maréchal ne se rend pas?

"Non pas précisément: on ne nous croit pas faits pour un tel héroïsme; mais quelque chose de bon et de fort: vous entendez bien, quelque chose de fort.

"Je cours à l'hôtel du maréchal. Il était absent, mais j'y trouve les officiers de son état-major réunis. Je me fais annoncer de la part du Roi de France, et je suis reçu avec une politesse respectueuse; j'explique le sujet de ma mission à celui des officiers que je devais supposer le chef de l'état-major. Il me répond par des regrets sur l'absence de M. le maréchal, et s'excuse sur l'impuissance où il est de donner des ordres sans avoir pris les siens. J'insiste, on prend le parti d'aller chercher le maréchal qu'on était sur de trouver dans le lieu confident de ses plus chers plaisirs, au Palais-Royal, No. 113. Il arrive avec sa mauvaise humeur naturelle à laquelle se joignit le chagrin d'avoir été dérangé de sa partie de trente-et-un. Il m'écoute impatiemment, et comme il m'avait fort mal compris, il me répond de telle sorte qu'à mon tour je n'y comprends rien du tout. Le chef d'état-major reprend avec lui la conversation en allemand. Elle dure quelque temps, et j'entendais assez la langue pour m'apercevoir que le maréchal rejetait avec violence les observations fort raisonnables que faisait l'officier. Enfin, ce dernier me dit que M. le maréchal n'avait pas donné l'ordre pour la destruction du pont, que je concevais sans peine comment le nom qu'il avait reçu importunait des soldats prussiens; mais que du moment que le Roi de France avait fait justice de ce nom, il ne doutait pas que les entreprises commencées contre ce pont ne cessassent à l'instant même, et que l'ordre allait en être donné. Je lui demandai la permission d'attendre que l'ordre fût parti pour que j'eusse le droit de rassurer complétement Sa Majesté. Il le trouva bon. Le maréchal était retourné bien vite à son cher No. 113; l'ordre partit

and which might justifiably have been taken away at the first capture of Paris, was this time an unwarranted robbery, against which the King and his ministers could only protest in a manner which seemed offensive to the conquerors and feeble to the French people.

The payment of a large indemnity, the maintenance of a large foreign army, to be supported by France for seven years for the suppression of its own action and independence, were conditions that no French minister could sign with dignity, and least of all the minister who had taken so active a part with the coalition.

Having assisted at the appointment of a French government which was friendly to good relations with England, and it being our predominant

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en effet. Je suivis l'officier jusque sur la place, et quand je vis que les ouvriers avaient cessé et se retiraient avec leurs outils, je vins rendre compte à M. de Talleyrand de cette triste victoire. Cela lui rendit un peu de bonne humeur. 'Puisque les choses se sont passées de la sorte, dit le prince, on pourrait tirer parti de votre idée de ce matin, que le Roi avait menacé de se faire porter sur le pont pour sauter de compagnie : il y a là matière d'un bon article de journal. Arrangez cela.'

"Je l'arrangeai en effet ; l'article parut dans les feuilles du surlendemain. Louis XVIII. dût être bien effrayé d'un pareil coup de tête de sa part ; mais ensuite il en accepta de bonne grâce la renommée. Je l'ai entendu complimenter de cet admirable trait de courage, et il répendait avec une assurance parfaite. . . . ."

interest to be on good terms with the French nation, we should have firmly resisted the imposition of such disgraceful conditions.

The natural consequence of our not doing so was that the Emperor Alexander, who had never forgiven M. de Talleyrand for his conduct at the recent congress, did not now disguise his personal antipathy to him, and told Louis XVIII. that he had nothing to expect from the cabinet of St. Petersburg as long as M. de Talleyrand was at the head of that of the Tuileries; but that, if his Majesty gave M. de Talleyrand's place to M. de Richelieu, he (the Emperor) would then do what he could to mitigate the severity of the conditions that all the allies now peremptorily demanded.

XIV.

The Duc de Richelieu, illustrious by his name, and with a character which did honour to that name, was one of those nobles who, when the state of France rendered it impossible as they thought to take an active part in their own country, could not, nevertheless, submit themselves to the useless

inactivity of an *émigré's* life in the suburbs of London. He sought his fortune then in Russia, and found it in the Emperor Alexander's favour, at whose desire he undertook the government of the Crimea, and marked his administration by an immense progress in the condition of that country.

The new order of things made him again a Frenchman; but, diffident of his own powers, he was far from being ambitious of office, and even declined it at the first Restoration. But the public has frequently a tendency to give people what it is thought they don't want, and there was a pretty general feeling that M. de Richelieu was a man destined to figure politically in his native land. His air was noble, his manners were polished and courteous, his honesty and straightforwardness proverbial, his habits of business regular, his abilities mediocre; but there was that about him which is felt and cannot be defined, and which points out persons for the first places, if they are to have any places at all. Every one acknowledged then that if the Duc de Richelieu was to be a minister, he should be the first minister.

The King was delighted to get rid of M. de Talleyrand, whose presence reminded him of an obligation, and whose easy air of superiority was

disagreeable to his pride. But it was deemed prudent to wait the result of the elections that were then pending.

They were decidedly unfavourable to the existing administration. A government, in fact, can only be moderate when it is strong, and the government of M. de Talleyrand was weak, for the only efficient support it could have had against the court party, was that of the King's favour, and this support it had not got.

Thus, the Royalists, emboldened by the foreign armies which were, so to speak, holding a rod over their opponents, acted with the force of a party which considered it must be victorious,—and carried all before it.

For a moment, M. de Talleyrand seemed disposed to resist the coming reaction and even obtained the creation of some peers, whom the King unwillingly consented to name for that purpose. But, exposed to the violent hostility of the Emperor of Russia, and not having the active friendship of Great Britain, he saw that the struggle could not succeed; and, whilst foreseeing and foretelling that his retirement would be the commencement of a policy that would eventually link France with the despotic governments of the continent in

a war against liberal opinions, he resigned on the national ground that he could not sign such a treaty as the allies now proposed; and on the 24th of September ceased to be prime minister of France.

Louis XVIII. rewarded his retirement with an annual pension of one hundred thousand francs, and the high court charge of great chamberlain, the functions of which, by the way, the ex-minister, who might be seen coolly and impassively standing behind the King's chair on all state occasions, notwithstanding the cold looks of the sovereign and the sagacious sneers of his courtiers, always scrupulously fulfilled.

In their last official interview, his Majesty observed:

"You see to what circumstances oblige me: I have to thank you for your zeal, you are without reproach, and may remain unmolested at Paris." *

This phrase pierced through the usual coolness of the person it was addressed to. He replied with some vehemence:

"I have had the happiness of rendering suffi-

* "Vous voyez à quoi les circonstances me forcent: j'ai à vous remercier de votre zèle, vous êtes sans reproche, et rien ne vous empêche de rester tranquillement à Paris."

ciently important services to the King, to believe that they are not forgotten. I cannot understand then what could oblige me to quit Paris. I shall remain there, and shall be too happy to find that the counsels which the King receives will not be such as to compromise his dynasty and France." *

As these remarks were made on either side before the cabinet, and subsequently repeated, they may be considered authentic.

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* "J'ai eu le bonheur de rendre au Roi assez de services pour croire qu'ils n'ont pas été oubliés; je ne comprendrais pas ce qui pourrait me forcer de quitter Paris. J'y resterai, et je serai trop heureux d'apprendre qu'on ne fera pas suivre au Roi une ligne capable de compromettre sa dynastie et la France."

TALLEYRAND,

THE POLITIC MAN.

PART VI.

M. de Talleyrand's retirement from public affairs during the period which closed with the dethronement of Charles X.—Appearance in the House of Peers on two occasions, to protest against the Spanish war and to defend the liberty of the press.—Reasons for the course he pursued.—Share in the advent of Louis Philippe.—Accepts the embassy to London.—Conduct and policy when there.—Retires after the Quadruple Alliance.—Discourse in the Institute on M. Reinhard.—Death.—Summary of character.

PART VI.

FROM THE RETIREMENT OF M. DE TALLEYRAND TO THE REVOLUTION OF 1830.

I.

M. DE TALLEYRAND gave a proof of his sagacity when he foresaw that, with the violent Royalists entering into power under a minister named by the Autocrat of the North, a state of things was preparing that would lead to a war of opinion throughout Europe, and unite the governments that could not support liberal institutions with that party in the French nation which repudiated them. He was equally sagacious in retiring voluntarily from affairs, and doing so on national and not on party grounds. But at the same time he could not long have remained at the head of a parliamentary government, even had he been free from the peculiar difficulty which then surrounded him. To direct affairs with such a government, in critical times, you must have some of the passions of those times. M. de Talleyrand, as I have said at the beginning of this sketch, had no passions.

He represented the power of reason; but that power, which predominates at the end of every crisis, has its voice drowned at the commencement. His administration then was necessarily doomed: but he had at least the credit of having endeavoured, first to prevent and then to moderate those acts of vengeance which a minority that obtains the supremacy always wishes to inflict on an adverse majority: for he furnished passports and even money (the budget of foreign affairs was charged with four hundred and fifty-nine thousand francs for this purpose) to all who felt desirous to quit France—Ney, though he did not profit by the indulgence, might have done so. The list of proscriptions at first contained one hundred persons, M. de Talleyrand reduced that number to fifty-seven.* Labédoyere—and this owing entirely to his own imprudence, in obliging the government either to release him publicly or to bring him to trial—was the only victim of an administration which wished to be moderate when everyone was violent.

A most memorable epoch in French history now

* Of whom nineteen to be tried by military law, the rest banished. A list of sixty, who were to be warned to quit France, was in the same spirit reduced to twenty.

commenced—the constitutional education of the French nation. It went through a variety of vicissitudes. For a time the Royalist reaction, headed by the Comte d'Artois, prevailed. It was then for a moment stopped by the jealousy of Louis XVIII., who felt that France was in reality being governed by his brother, who could ride on horseback. After a short struggle the conflict between the two princes ceased, and M. de Villelle with more or less adroitness governed them both. The elder at last was deprived by death of the sceptre he had ceased to wield independently, and with the ardent desire he had ever felt to be loved by his countrymen, Charles X. legitimately commenced his right of ruling them. But a hesitating policy of conciliation producing after a short effort but a doubtful result, another policy was resolved upon. The King would show that he was king, and he selected a ministry ready to be his soldiers in a battle against popular ideas. The battle was fought: the King was vanquished. So passed the time from 1815 to 1830.

Within this epoch of fifteen years, during which it must be said that France, however agitated and divided, made an immense progress under the institutions that she owed in no small degree to M.

de Tâlleyrand, that statesman was little more than a spectator of passing events. The new patriots, orators, journalists, generals of the day, occupied public attention, and he ceased to be considered except as one of those characters of history that have been too interesting in their day to be consigned quietly to posterity. Moreover, the judgment passed on him from time to time by contemporaneous writers was usually superficial and sometimes supercilious.

As to the deputies whom local influence and the zeal of parties returned to the lower chamber, they were for the most part unknown to him by their antecedents, and not worth knowing for their merits.

In the upper chamber, where men of high rank and intellectual eminence were certainly to be found, his personal influence was not great; the sympathies and recollections of that chamber, whether amongst the old Royalists or most distinguished Bonapartists, were against him. There was no one consequently to press him to take part in its debates, nor were there many subjects of discussion sufficiently important to arouse his indolence, and call forth with dignity the exertions of a statesman who had played so great a part amidst the great

events of that marvellous period through which his career had run.

On one memorable occasion, however, he stepped boldly forward to claim—if affairs took the course which many thought most probable—the first place in a new system: this was when war, in 1823, was declared against Spain.

II.

That war was commenced by M. de Châteaubriand, who had always been M. de Talleyrand's antipathy, not merely as a war against the Spanish people, or in support of the Spanish monarch, but as a war which was to be considered an armed declaration in favour of ultra-monarchical principles, thus justifying all the previsions with which M. de Talleyrand had quitted office. A victory was certain to deliver France into the hands of the ultra-Royalist party; defeat or difficulty was as certain to give power to more moderate men and more moderate opinions. In the one case, M. de Talleyrand had nothing to hope; in the other, it was necessary to fix attention on the fact that he had predicated misfortune. The struggle in Spain, moreover, depended greatly on the state of public

opinion; and this alone made it advisable to endeavour to create as strong a belief as possible that men of weight and consideration looked upon it with apprehension and disfavour. It was under these circumstances that M. de Talleyrand expressed the following opinion :*

" Messieurs," this impressive discourse commences, " il y a aujourd'hui seize ans qu'appellé par celui qui gouvernait alors le monde à lui dire mon avis sur une lutte à engager avec le peuple espagnol, j'eus le malheur de lui déplaire, en lui dévoilant l'avenir, en révélant tous les dangers qui allaient naître en foule d'une aggression non moins injuste que téméraire. La disgrâce fut le prix de ma sincérité. Etrange destinée, que celle qui me ramène après ce long espace de temps à renouveler auprès du souverain légitime les mêmes efforts, les mêmes conseils. Le discours de la couronne a fait disparaître les dernières espérances des amis de la paix, et,

* " Gentlemen,—It is to-day sixteen years ago, that, called by him who then governed the world to give him my opinion as to a conflict which we were about to engage in with the Spanish people, I had the misfortune to displease him by unveiling of the future, and revealing all the dangers likely to spring from an aggression not less unjust than rash. Disgrace was the price of my sincerity. Strange destiny! that which brings me back after this long space of time, to renew to my legitimate sovereign the same efforts, the same counsels. The speech of

menaçant pour l'Espagne, il est, je dois le dire, alarmant pour la France. . . . . Oui, j'aurai le courage de dire toute la vérité. Ces mêmes sentiments chevaleresques qui, en 1789, entraînaient les cœurs généreux, n'ont pu sauver la monarchie légitime, ils peuvent encore la perdre en 1823."

The Spanish war, in spite of these alarming prognostications, was successful; and courtiers sneered not unnaturally at the statesman who had denounced it. But if M. de Talleyrand had not shown his usual foresight, he had not acted contrary to his usual prudence. People, in deciding on the conduct they should adopt, can only calculate upon probabilities, and must, after all, as Machiavelli with his worldly experience observes, "leave much to chance." This sort of prophecy, contained in the speech I have just quoted from, had a good deal in its favour; M. de Châteaubriand himself had, as I once heard from the lips

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the crown has dispelled the last hopes of the friends of peace, and, menacing for Spain, is, I ought to say it, as alarming for France. . . . Yes, I will have the courage to tell all the truth. The chivalrous sentiments which in 1789 carried away the generous hearts of that epoch, could not save the legitimate monarchy; they may lose it in 1823."

of a person to whom he spoke confidentially, the most serious doubts as to the issue of the approaching campaign; though he considered that its happy termination would firmly establish the Bourbons as sovereigns in France, and himself as their prime minister: in both of which conclusions he was wrong, though it seemed likely he would be right. The contemplated enterprize was, in fact, unpopular; the prince at its head was without capacity, the generals around him were on ill terms with each other, the soldiers themselves of doubtful allegiance. A considerable body of Frenchmen and some French soldiers were in the enemies' ranks, and were about, in the name of liberty and Napoleon II., to make an appeal, from the opposite shore of the Bidassoa, to their advancing comrades.

The courage of the nation now attacked had on many occasions been remarkable; the discipline of its armies had been lately improved; the policy of England was uncertain; the credit of France was far from good. These were all fair elements out of which it was by no means unreasonable to concoct a disastrous presage, which, like many presages, had a tendency to realise itself. But more especially it should be observed that the predictions

of M. de Talleyrand, if unfortunate, would do him no harm, and if fortunate, would replace him on the pinnacle of power.

III.

The ex-minister of Louis XVIII. thus revived the recollections of the ex-minister of Napoleon le Grand; as already the member of the Chamber of Peers had vindicated the principles of the veteran of the National Assembly; for on the 24th of July, 1821, we find him expressing the same sentiments in favour of the liberty of the press after practical experience, which at the commencement of his career he had proclaimed with theoretical anticipations.

As the question at issue is not yet solved in the country he was addressing, it may not be without interest to hear what he says:*

* * * * * *

"Without the liberty of the press there can be no representative government; it is one of its essential instruments—its chief instrument, in fact:

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* "Sans la liberté de la presse il n'y a point de gouvernement représentatif; elle est un de ses instruments essentiels, elle en est l'instru-

every government has its principles, and we cannot remember too often that frequently those principles which are excellent for one government are detestable for another. It has been abundantly demonstrated by several members of this House, both in this and the preceding session, that without the liberty of the press representative government does not exist. I will not, then, repeat what you have already heard or read, and which is no doubt the frequent subject of your reflections.

"But there are two points of view in which it appears to me the question has not been sufficiently treated, and which I resolve into two propositions:

"1st. The liberty of the press is a necessity of the time.

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ment principal: chaque gouvernement a les siens, et nous ne nous souvenons pas assez que souvent ceux qui sont bons pour tel gouvernement sont détestables pour tel autre. Il a été démontré jusqu'à l'évidence, par plusieurs membres de cette Chambre, qui, dans cette session et dans le précédentes, ont parlé sur cette matière, que sans la liberté de la presse il n'y a point de gouvernement représentatif. Je ne vous redirai donc point ce que vous avez tous ou entendu, ou lu, et ce qui a dû souvent être l'objet de vos méditations.

"Mais il est deux points de vue sous lesquels la question ne me paraît pas avoir été suffisamment examinée et que je réduis à ces deux propositions:

"1°. La liberté de la presse est une nécessité du temps.

"2°. Un gouvernement s'expose quand il se refuse obstinément et trop longtemps à ce que le temps a proclamé nécessaire.

"L'esprit humain n'est jamais complètement stationnaire. La décou-

"2nd. A government exposes itself when it obstinately refuses, and that for a lengthened period, what the time proclaims as necessary.

"The *mind is never completely stationary.* The discovery of yesterday is only a means to arrive at a fresh discovery to-morrow. One is nevertheless justified in affirming that it *appears to act by impulses, because there are moments when it appears particularly desirous of bringing forth—of producing; at others, on the contrary, when, satisfied by its conquests, it appears to rest itself, and is occupied in putting the treasures it has acquired in order, rather than in seeking after new ones.* The seventeenth century was one of these fortunate epochs. The human intellect, dazzled by the immense riches which the art of printing had put at its disposal, paused to gaze in admiration on the wondrous

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verte de la veille n'est pour lui qu'un moyen de plus d'arriver à des découvertes nouvelles. Il est pourtant vrai de dire qu'il semble procéder par crises, parce-qu'il y a des époques où il est plus particulièrement tourmenté du besoin d'enfanter et de produire, d'autres, au contraire, où, satisfait de ses conquêtes, il paraît se reposer sur lui-même, et plus occupé de mettre ordre à ses richesses que d'en acquérir de nouvelles: le dix-septième siècle fut une de ces époques fortunées. L'esprit humain, étonné des richesses immenses dont l'imprimerie l'avait mis complètement en possession, s'arrêta d'admiration pour jouir de ce magnifique héritage. Tout entier aux jouissances des lettres, des sciences et des arts, il mit sa gloire et son bonheur à produire des chefs-d'œuvre.

sight. Giving itself up entirely to the enjoyment of letters, science, and art, its glory and happiness became concentrated in the production of masterpieces. All the great men of the time of Louis XIV. vied with each other in embellishing a social order, beyond which they saw nothing, and desired nothing, and which appeared to them made to last as long as the glory of the great king, the object alike of their respect and of their enthusiasm. But when they had exhausted the fertile mine of antiquity, their intelligent activity found itself almost compelled to search elsewhere, and discovered nothing new, except in speculative studies that embrace all the future, and of which the limits are unknown. It was amidst these dispositions that the eighteenth century

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Tous les grands génies du siècle de Louis XIV. travaillèrent a l'envi à embellir un ordre social au-delà duquel ils ne voyaient rien, ils ne desiraient rien, et qui leur paraissait devoir durer autant que la gloire du grand Roi, objet de leurs respects et de leur enthousiasme. Mais quand on eut épuisé cette mine féconde de l'antiquité, l'activité de l'esprit humain se trouva presque forcée de chercher ailleurs, et il ne trouva de choses nouvelles que dans les études spéculatives qui embrassent tout l'avenir, et dont les limites sont inconnues. Ce fut dans ces dispositions que s'ouvrit le dix-huitième siècle, qui devait si peu ressembler au précédent. Aux leçons poétiques de Télémaque succédèrent les théories de l'esprit des lois, et Port-Royal fut remplacé par l'Encyclopédie.

dawned—a century so little resembling the preceding one. To the poetical lessons of Telemachus succeeded the theories of 'the *Esprit des Lois*,' and Port Royal was replaced by the Encyclopædia.

"I pray you to observe, gentlemen, that I neither censure nor approve: I simply relate.

"In calling to mind all the calamities poured out upon France during the Revolution, we must not be altogether unjust towards those superior men that brought it about; and we ought not to forget, that if in their writings they have not always been able to avoid falling into error, we owe to them the revelation of some great truths. Above all, let us not forget that we ought not to make them responsible for the precipitation with which

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"Je vous prie de remarquer, Messieurs, que je ne blâme ni n'approuve: je raconte.

"En nous rappelant tous les maux versés sur la France pendant la révolution, il ne faut cependant pas être tout-à-fait injuste envers les génies supérieurs qui l'ont amenée; et nous ne devons pas oublier que si dans leurs écrits ils n'ont pas toujours su se préserver de l'erreur, nous leur devons aussi la révélation de quelques grandes vérités. N'oublions pas surtout que nous ne devons pas les rendre responsables de la précipitation inconsidérée avec laquelle la France, presque tout entière, s'est lancée dans la carrière qu'ils s'étaient contentés d'indiquer. On a mis en pratique des aperçus, et toujours on a pu dire: 'malheur à celui qui dans son fol orgueil veut aller au-delà des nécessités du temps,

France rushed practically into a career which her philosopher merely indicated. Thoughts were turned at once into action, and one might well say, 'Woe to him who in his foolish pride would go beyond the necessities of his epoch! Some abyss or revolution awaits him.' But when we simply follow the necessity of an epoch, we are certain not to go astray.

"Now, gentlemen, do you wish to know what were in 1789 the real necessities of that epoch? Turn to the mandates of the different orders represented in the National Assembly. *All that was then the reflected wish of enlightened men is what I call necessities.* The Constituent Assembly was only their interpreter when it proclaimed liberty of worship, equality before the law, individual liberty,

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l'abîme ou quelque révolution l'attendent.' Mais quand on ne fait que ce que le temps commande, on est sûr de ne pas s'égarer.

"Or, Messieurs, voulez-vous savoir quelles étaient en 1789 les véritables nécessités du temps? ouvrez les cahiers des différents ordres. Tout ce qui était alors le vœu réfléchi des hommes éclairés, voilà ce que j'appelle des nécessités. L'Assemblée Constituante n'en fut que l'interprète lorsqu'elle proclama la liberté des cultes, l'égalité devant la loi, la liberté individuelle, le droit des juridictions (nul ne peut être distrait de ses juges naturels), la liberté de la presse.

"Elle fut peu d'accord avec le temps lorsqu'elle institua une Chambre unique, lorsqu'elle détruisit le sanction royale, lorsqu'elle tortura les consciences, etc., etc. Et cependant, malgré ses erreurs, dont je n'ai

the right of jurisdiction (that no one should be deprived of his natural judges), *the liberty of the press.*

"It was little in accordance with its epoch when it instituted a single chamber, when it destroyed the royal sanction, when it tortured the conscience, &c. &c. And, nevertheless, in spite of its faults, of which I have only cited a small number—faults followed by such great calamities—posterity which has began for it accords to it the glory of establishing the foundation of our new public rights.

"*Let us hold, then, for certain, that all that is desired, that all that is proclaimed good and useful by all the enlightened men of a country, without variation, during a series of years diversely occupied, is a necessity of the times.* Such, gentlemen, is the liberty of the press. I address myself to all those amongst

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cité qu'un petit nombre, erreurs suivies de si grandes calamités, la postérité qui a commencé pour elle, lui reconnaît la gloire d'avoir établi les bases de notre nouveau droit public.

"Tenons donc pour certain que ce qui est voulu, que ce qui est proclamé bon et utile par tous les hommes éclairés d'un pays, sans variation pendant une suite d'années diversement remplies, est une nécessité du temps. Telle est, Messieurs, la liberté de la presse. Je m'adresse à tous ceux d'entre vous qui sont plus particulièrement mes contemporains, n'était-elle pas l'objet des vœux de tous ces hommes excellents que nous avons admirés dans notre jeunesse,—des Malesherbes, des Trudaines,—qui certes valaient bien les hommes d'état que nous avons

you who are more particularly my contemporaries —was it not the dear object and wish of all those excellent men whom we so admired in our youth —the Malesherbes, the Trudaines—who surely were well worth the statesmen we have had since? The place which the men I have named occupy in our memories amply proves that the liberty of the press consolidates legitimate renown; and if it destroys usurped reputations, where is the harm?

"Having proved my first proposition, that the liberty of the press is in France the necessary result of the state of its society, it remains for me to establish my second proposition—that a government is in danger when it obstinately refuses what the state or spirit of its society requires.

"The most tranquil societies, and those which

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depuis? La place que les hommes que j'ai nommés occupent dans nos souvenirs prouve bien que la liberté de la presse consolide les renommées légitimes; et si elle ruine les réputations usurpées, où donc est le mal?

"Après avoir prouvé que la liberté de la presse est en France le résultat nécessaire de l'état actuel de la société, il me reste à établir ma seconde proposition, qu'un gouvernement s'expose quand il se refuse obstinément à ce que le temps a proclamé une nécessité.

"Les sociétés les plus tranquilles et qui devraient être les plus heureuses, renferment toujours dans leur sein un certain nombre d'hommes qui aspirent à conquérir, à la faveur du désordre, les richesses qu'ils n'ont pas et l'importance qu'ils ne devraient jamais avoir. Est-il prudent de mettre aux mains de ces ennemis de l'ordre social, des motifs

ought to be the most happy, always number amongst them a certain class of men who hope to acquire by the means of disorder those riches which they do not possess, and that importance which they ought never to have. Is it prudent to furnish the enemies of social order with pretexts for discontent, without which their individual efforts to promote disturbance would be impotent?

"Society in its progressive march is destined to experience new wants. *I can perfectly understand that governments ought not to be in any hurry to recognise them; but when it has once recognised them,* to take back what it has given, or, what comes to the same thing, to be always suspending its exercise, is a temerity of which I more than any one desire that those who conceived *the convenient* and

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de mécontentement sans lesquels leur perversité serait éternellement impuissante?

"La société, dans sa marche progressive, est destinée à subir de nouvelles nécessités; je comprends que les gouvernements ne doivent pas se hâter de les reconnaître et d'y faire droit; mais quand il les ont reconnues, reprendre ce qu'on a donné, ou, ce qui revient au même, le suspendre sans cesse, c'est une témérité dont, plus que personne, je desire que n'aient pas à se repentir ceux qui en conçoivent la commode et funeste pensée. Il ne faut jamais compromettre la bonne foi d'un gouvernement. De nos jours, il n'est pas facile de tromper longtemps. Il y a quelqu'un qui a plus d'esprit que Voltaire, plus d'esprit que Bonaparte, plus d'esprit que chacun des directeurs, que chacun des ministres passés, présents, à venir, c'est tout le monde. S'engager, ou

fatal thought may not have to repent. The good faith of a government should never be compromised. *Now-a-days, it is not easy to deceive for long. There is some one who has more intelligence than Voltaire; more intelligence than Bonaparte; more intelligence than each of the Directors—than each of the ministers, past, present, and to come. That some one is everybody.* To engage in, or at least to persist in, a struggle against what according to general belief is a public interest, is a political fault,—and at this day all political faults are dangerous.

"When the press is free—when each one knows that his interests are or will be defended—all wait with patience a justice more or less tardy. Hope supports, and with reason, for this hope cannot be deceived for long; but when the press is enslaved, when no voice can be raised, discontent will soon exact, on the part of the government, either too much concession or too much repression."

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du moins persister dans une lutte où tout le monde se croit intéressé, c'est une faute, et aujourd'hui toutes les fautes politiques sont dangereuses.

"Quand la presse est libre, lorsque chacun peut savoir que ses intérêts sont ou seront défendus, on attend du temps une justice plus ou moins tardive; l'espérance soutient, et avec raison, car cette espérance ne peut être longtemps trompée; mais quand la presse est asservie, quand nulle voix ne peut s'élever, les mécontentements exigent bientôt de la part du gouvernement, ou trop de faiblesse ou trop de répression."

On the 26th of February, 1822, M. de Talleyrand spoke on the same subject, commenting on the rights accorded by, and the intentions which had presided over, the charter. Such efforts on such subjects preserved for his name a national character, and connected the most memorable acts of his own career with the most ardent aspirations of his country.

IV.

Still, notwithstanding these occasional appearances on the public stage, it is certain that the easy though momentary triumph of a cause of which he had somewhat solemnly announced the almost certain defeat, disgusted him from further meddling in affairs, and much of his time was afterwards passed out of Paris, at Valençay, the estate which he meant should be ancestral, in Touraine. His fortune, moreover, was much affected by the bankruptcy of a commercial house in which he had engaged himself as what we call a "sleeping partner." Nevertheless he held, when in the capital, a great existence:—his drawing-room becoming to the Restoration what it had been to the best days of the Empire—a rival court, and a court

which gathered to itself all the eminences of the old times, and all the rising young men of the new.

There, from his easy-chair, drawn up to the window which looks upon the Tuileries, and surrounded by those who had acted in the past with him, or who might make a future for him, he read with pleased composure the fall of ministry after ministry on the flushed countenance of the eager deputy rushing to or from the fatal vote; until, at the nomination of M. de Polignac, he repeated calmly to those about him, the phrase he is said to have pronounced after the Russian campaign: "*C'est le commencement de la fin.*" Indeed, ever since the dismissal of the National Guard, and the failure of M. de Martignac's ministry, which, tried as it was and at the time it was, could not but fail, he spoke without reserve, though always with expressions of regret, to those in his intimacy, of the extreme peril to which the legitimate monarchy was hurrying; and he could do this with the more certainty, from the knowledge he possessed of Charles X.'s character, the good and bad qualities of which he considered equally dangerous.

V.

The following account of the share which M. de Talleyrand took in the new Revolution, that, after many ominous preludes, at last took place, was given me by an actor in the history he relates.

For the first two days of the insurrection, viz., the 27th and 28th of July, M. de Talleyrand said little or nothing, remaining quietly at home and refusing himself to all inquirers. On the third day he called to him his private secretary, and with that winning manner he knew so well how to adopt when he had any object to gain, said to him: "M. C——, I have a favour to request of you; go for me to St. Cloud" (the service was one of some danger and difficulty), "see if the royal family are still there, or what they are doing." The secretary went and found Charles X. just departing for Rambouillet. M. de Talleyrand, who had during his messenger's absence seen General Sebastiani, General Gérard, and two or three other influential persons of the same party and opinions, on hearing that the King had quitted St. Cloud, retired to his room and remained there alone for about two hours, when he again sent for

the same gentleman, and this time his manners were, if possible, more persuasive than before. "I have yet another and greater favour to ask, M. C——. Go for me to Neuilly; get by some means or other to Madame Adelaide;* give her this piece of paper, and when she has read it, either see it burnt or bring it back to me." The piece of paper contained merely these words: "Madame, peut avoir toute confiance dans le porteur, qui est mon secrétaire." "When madame has read this, you will tell her that there is not a moment to lose. The Duc d'Orléans must be here to-morrow; he must take no other title than that of Lieutenant-general of the Kingdom, which has been accordèd to him—'*le reste viendra.*'"

With this confidential message, M. C.—— started. With great difficulty—for the gates of Neuilly were denied to every one—he got to the château and to Madame. On saying that he brought a message from M. de Talleyrand, "Ah, ce bon prince, j'étais sûre qu'il ne nous oublierait pas?" † The messenger then delivered his credentials and his message. "Tell the prince that I will pledge my word for my brother's following

* The Duc d'Orléans' sister.

† Ah, the good prince! I knew he would not forget us.

his advice. He shall be in Paris to-morrow," was the reply; after which M. C—— had the courage to ask, though with some hesitation, that the piece of paper should be destroyed or returned. It was given back to him, and he restored it to M. de Talleyrand, who did not, by the way, forget to ask for it. It only remains to say that the Duc d'Orléans did come to Paris the following day; did only take the title of Lieutenant-general; and that the rest did, as M. de Talleyrand had predicted, follow. Thus ended the last Revolution with which this singular man was blended.

When the message he sent arrived, the future king of the French was concealed, the conduct he seemed likely to pursue uncertain; and those who know anything of revolutions will be aware of the value of a day and an hour. Moreover, this prince got to the throne by the very door which M. de Talleyrand had warned Louis XVIII. to close, viz. a constitution proceeding *from* the people.

Nor is this all: the knowledge that M. de Talleyrand had recognised, and even been concerned in establishing, the new dynasty, had no slight influence on the opinion formed of it in other courts, and might be said more especially to have decided our own important and imme-

diate recognition of it. He himself was then offered the post of minister of foreign affairs, but he saw it was more difficult and less important than that of ambassador to St. James's, and while he refused the first position he accepted the last.

VI.

The choice was a fortunate one. No one else could have supplied M. de Talleyrand in England at that juncture; he knew well and personally both the Duke of Wellington and Lord Grey, the chiefs of the opposing parties, and it was perhaps his presence at the British court, more than any other circumstance of the time, which preserved, in a crisis when all the elements of war were struggling to get loose, that universal peace which for so many years remained unbroken.

With a firm conviction, indeed, of the necessity of this peace, he took the best and only course for maintaining it. An ordinary diplomatist is occupied with the thousand small affairs passing through his hands, and the thousand ideas of more or less importance connected with them. M. de Talleyrand's great talent, as I have more than once said, was in selecting at once the most

important point of the moment, and in sacrificing, without delay or scruple, whatever was necessary to attain his object with respect to that point.

He saw that the peaceful reception of the Orleans' dynasty could be obtained, and could only be obtained, by being on good terms with England. A quarrel with us was an European war; a good understanding with us rendered such a war unlikely, almost impossible. Belgium was the especial question on which all earlier negotiations turned, and on which the amity of our government depended. That country, smarting under many real, and irritated by the thought of many fancied, grievances, had thrown off the Dutch yoke. The Dutch troops, which a little more vigour might have rendered victorious, had retreated from Brussels; the frontier fortresses were in the hands of the insurgents, and it is no use disguising the fact that there was, is, and ever will be, a considerable party in France in favour of extending the French frontier, and comprising Antwerp within the French dominions. England, however, was not then, and probably will not at any time, with statesmen caring for the safety of their country, submit to this. She had, in fact, at the peace of 1814, provided especially, as she

thought, for the safety of the Netherlands, by the amalgamation of the Belgian and Dutch provinces into one kingdom, and by the fortresses which she had built or repaired for protecting that kingdom.

This policy was now overthrown, and could not be reconstructed without exciting the warlike and excited spirit of the French people. On the other hand, we could only make a limited sacrifice to French susceptibility and ambition. Much skill then was necessary on the part of all persons, but more especially on the part of the French negotiator, to avoid any serious wound to the interests of the one nation, or to the feelings of the other. There was a call, in short, for the steadiest discretion without any change of purpose; and all through the various phases of those long negotiations, by which jarring questions were finally composed, M. de Talleyrand warily persevered in his plan of planting the new government of France amongst the established governments of Europe through its alliance with Great Britain.

The establishment of conferences in London was one of the most artful of the measures adopted with this end. Here the ambassador of Louis Philippe was brought at once, and in union with the Cabinet of St. James's, into almost daily and intimate com-

munication with the representatives of the other great powers. A variety of misrepresentations were removed, and a variety of statements made, not merely useful for the questions which were especially under discussion, but for the general position and policy of the State which the veteran diplomatist represented.

The quadruple alliance—an alliance of the western and constitutional governments of Europe—was, in fact, a mere extension of the alliance between France and England, and a great moral exhibition of the trust placed by the parties themselves in that alliance. With this remarkable and popular compact—a compact which embodied the best principles, on which an Anglo-French alliance can be formed—the diplomatic career of M. de Talleyrand closed. He felt, as he himself said, that there "is a sort of space between death and life, which should be employed in dying decently."

The retirement of Lord Grey removed from the scene of public affairs in England that generation which, long accustomed to the reputation of a man who had filled half a century with his name, treated both himself and his opinions with the flattering respect due to old remembrances. To the men of the new government he was, comparatively speak-

ing, a stranger. The busy time of their career he had passed in seclusion from affairs. They considered him, in a certain degree, as antiquated and gone by: a sentiment which he was keen enough to detect, and sensitive enough to feel deeply.

His opinions, indeed, became somewhat embittered by certain affronts or negligences of which, during the latter part of his embassy, he thought he had to complain; and, after his retirement, it is said that he rather counselled his royal master to consider that the advantages sought for in an alliance with England were obtained, and that the future policy of France should be to conciliate other powers.

VII.

At all events M. de Talleyrand, during his mission in England, not only sustained his previous reputation, but added very considerably to it. What struck the vulgar, and many, indeed, above the vulgar, who did not remember that the really crafty man disguises his craft, was the plain, open, and straightforward way in which he spoke of and dealt with all public matters, without any of those mysterious devices which distinguish the simpleton who is in the diplomacy from the states-

man who is a diplomatist. In fact, having made up his mind to consider the English alliance at this time essential to his country, he was well aware that the best and only way of obtaining it was by such frank and fair dealing as would win the confidence of British statesmen.

Lord Palmerston told me that his manner in diplomatic conferences was remarkable for its extreme absence of pretension, without any derogation of authority. He sat, for the most part, quiet, as if approving; sometimes, however, stating his opinion, but never arguing or discussing;—a habit foreign to the natural indolence which accompanied him throughout his active career, and which he also condemned on such occasions, as fruitless and impolitic: "I argue before a public assembly," he used to say, "not because I hope to convince any one there, but because I wish my opinions to be known to the world. But, in a room beyond which my voice is not to extend, the attempt to enforce my opinion against that which another is engaged to adopt, obliges him to be more formal and positive in expressing his hostility, and often leads him, from a desire to shine in the sense of his instructions, to go beyond them."

Whatever M. de Talleyrand did, therefore, in

the way of argument, he usually did beforehand, and alone, with the parties whom he was afterwards to encounter, and here he tried to avoid controversy. His manner was to bring out the principal point in his own opinion, and present it to the best advantage in every possible position.

Napoleon complained of this, saying, he could not conceive how people found M. de Talleyrand eloquent. "Il tournait toujours sur la même idée." * But this was a system with him, as with Fox, who laid it down as the great principle for an orator who wished to leave an impression.

He was apt, however, to ask to have a particular word or sentence, of which he had generally studied the bearing and calculated the effect, introduced into a paper under discussion, and from the carelessness with which he made the request it was usually complied with. There was something in this silent way of doing business, which disappointed those who expected a more frequent use of the brilliant weapons which it was well known that the great wit of the day had at his command. But in the social circle which he wished to charm, or with the single individual whom he

* He always turned round the same idea.

wished to gain, the effect of his peculiar eloquence generally overran the expectation.

M. de Bacourt, who was secretary to his embassy in London, informed me "that M. de Talleyrand rarely wrote a whole despatch," but that a variety of little memorandums and phrases were usually to be found in his portfolio. When the question which these notes referred to had to be treated, they were produced, and confided to him (M. de Bacourt), who was told the general sense of the document he was to write, and how such memoranda were to be introduced. Finally, a revisal took place, and the general colouring, which proved that the despatch came from the ambassador, and not from his chancery, was fused over the composition. As a general rule in business, M. de Talleyrand held to the rule, that a chief should never do anything that a subaltern could do for him.

"You should always," he used to say, "have time to spare, and rather put off till to-morrow what you cannot do well and easily to-day, than get into that hurry and flurry which is the necessary consequence of feeling one has too much to do."

I have painted the subject of this sketch personally in his early life. Towards the close of his existence, the likenesses of him that are common

are sufficiently resembling. His head, with a superfluity of hair, looked large, and was sunk deep into an expanded chest. His countenance was pale and grave, with a mouth, the under-lip rather protruding, which formed itself instantly and almost instinctively into a smile that was sarcastic without being ill-natured. He talked little in general society, merely expressing at intervals some opinion that had the air of an epigram, and which produced its effect as much from the manner with which it was brought out, as from its intrinsic merit. He was, in fact, an actor, but an actor with such ease and nonchalance that he never seemed more natural than when he was acting.

His recorded *bon mots*, of which I have given some, have become hackneyed, especially the best. But I will venture to mention a few that occur to me, as I am writing, and which are remarkable as expressing an opinion concerning an individual or a situation.

When the Comte d'Artois wished to be present at the councils of Louis XVIII., M. de Talleyrand opposed the project. The Comte d'Artois was offended, and reproached the minister. "Un jour," said M. de Talleyrand, "Votre Majesté me remerciera pour ce qui déplaît a Votre Altesse Royale."

M. de Châteaubriand was no favourite with M. de Talleyrand. He condemned him as an affected writer, and an impossible politician. When the "Martyrs" first appeared, and was run after by the public with an appetite that the booksellers could not satisfy, M. de Fontanes, after speaking of it with an exaggerated eulogium, finished his explanation of the narrative by saying that Eudore and Cymodocée were thrown into the circus and devoured "par les bêtes." * "Comme l'ouvrage," said M. de Talleyrand.

Some person saying that Fouché had a great contempt for mankind, "C'est vrai," said M. de Talleyrand, "cet homme s'est beaucoup étudié." †

There is a certain instinct which most persons have as to their successor; and when some one asked M. de Talleyrand a little before the Duc de Richelieu, governor of Odessa, was appointed prime minister in his own country, whether he, M. de Talleyrand, really thought that the Duc was fit to govern France, he replied, to the surprise of the questioner, "Most assuredly;" adding, after a slight pause, "No one knows the Crimea better."

* Untranslateable.

† It is true, that man has much studied himself.

A lady, using the privilege of her sex, was speaking with violence of the defection of the Duc de Raguse. "Mon Dieu, madame," said M. de Talleyrand, "tout cela ne prouve qu'une chose. C'est que sa montre avançait et tout le monde était à l'heure."*

A strong supporter of the chamber of peers, when there was much question as to its merits, said, "At least you there find consciences." "Ah, oui," said M. de Talleyrand, "beaucoup, beaucoup de consciences. Semonville, par example, en a au moins deux."†

Louis XVIII., speaking of M. de Blacas before M. de Talleyrand had expressed any opinion concerning him, said, "Ce pauvre Blacas, il aime la France, il m'aime, mais on dit qu'il est suffisant." "Ah oui, Sire, suffisant et insuffisant." ‡

We could prolong almost indefinitely this record of sayings from which M. de Talleyrand, notwithstanding his many services and great abilities, derives his popular and traditional reputation:

* "Mon Dieu, madam, all that only proved one thing. His watch advanced, and other people's was exact to the hour."

† "Ah, yes, a great many consciences; Semonville, for example, has at least two."

‡ "That poor Blacas, he loves France, and he loves me; but they say he is self-sufficient." "Oh yes, Sire, sufficient and insufficient."

but, in reality, they belong as much to the conversational epoch at which he entered the world, as to himself.

VIII.

On quitting England, he quitted not only diplomacy, as I have said, but public life, and passed the remainder of his days in the enjoyment of the highest situation, and the most agreeable and cultivated society, that his country could afford.

His fortune and ability might now, according to the Grecian sage, be estimated; for his career was closed; and, as the old sought his saloon as the hearth on which their brighter recollections could be revived, so the young were glad to test their opinions by the experience of "the politic man," who had passed through so many vicissitudes, and walked with a careless and haughty ease over the ruins of so many governments, at the fall of which he had assisted. He himself, with that cool presence of mind for which he was so remarkable, aware that he had but a few years between the grave and himself, employed them in one of his great and constant objects, that of

prepossessing the age about to succeed him in his favour, and explaining to those whom he thought likely to influence the coming generation, the darker passages of his brilliant career. To one distinguished person, M. Montalivet, who related to me the fact, he once said: "You have a prejudice against me, because your father was an Imperialist, and you think I deserted the Emperor. I have never kept fealty to any one longer than he has himself been obedient to common sense. But, if you judge all my actions by this rule, you will find that I have been eminently consistent; and where is there so degraded a human being, or so bad a citizen, as to submit his intelligence, or sacrifice his country, to any individual, however born, or however endowed?"

This, indeed, in a few words, was M. de Talleyrand's theory; a theory which has formed the school that without strictly adhering to the principle that common sense should be the test of obedience, bows to every authority with a smile and shrug of the shoulders, and the well-known phrase of "*La France avant tout.*"

Shortly previous to his last illness he appeared (evidently with the intention of bidding the world a sort of dignified adieu) in the tribune of the

Institute. The subject which he chose for his essay was M. Reinhard, who had long served under him, and was just dead, and with whom and himself, even in the circumstance of their both having received an ecclesiastical education, there was some sort of resemblance. The discourse is interesting on this ground, and also as a review of the different branches of the diplomatic service, and the duties attached to each — forming a kind of legacy to that profession of which the speaker had so long been the ornament.

IX.

"GENTLEMEN,*—

"I was in America when I was named a member of the Institute, and placed in the department of moral and political sciences, to which I have had the honour of being attached ever since it was first established.

"On my return to France, I made it my prin-

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* "MESSIEURS,—

"J'étais en Amérique, lorsque l'on eut la bonté de me nommer Membre de l'Institut, et de m'attacher à la classe des sciences morales et politique, à la quelle j'ai depuis son origine, l'honneur d'appartenir.

"A mon retour en France, mon premier soin fut de me rendre à ses

cipal object to attend its meetings, and to express to my new colleagues, many of whom we now so justly regret, the pleasure it gave me to find myself one of their number. At the first sitting I attended, the *bureau* was being renewed, and I had the honour of being named secretary. During six months, I drew up, to the best of my ability, the minutes of the proceedings, but my labours betrayed perhaps a little too plainly my modesty, for I had to report on a work which was new to me. The subject of it—treated by one of our most learned colleagues—was 'A Dissertation on the Ripuarian Laws,' and had evidently required from its author a research that I was unable to control. It was about the same period that I read at our public meetings several papers, which were received with such indulgence as to be thought

séances, et de témoigner aux personnes qui la composaient alors, et dont plusieurs nous ont laissé de justes regrets, le plaisir que j'avais de me trouver un de leurs collègues. A la première séance à laquelle j'assistai, on renouvelait le bureau et on me fit l'honneur de me nommer secrétaire. Le procès-verbal que je rédigeai pendant six mois avec autant de soin que je le pouvais, portait, peut-être un peu trop, le caractère de ma déférence ; car j'y rendais compte d'un travail qui m'était fort étranger. Ce travail, qui sans doute avait coûté bien des recherches, bien des veilles à un de nos plus savants collègues, avait pour titre 'Dissertation sur les Lois Ripuaires.' Je fis aussi, à la même époque, dans nos assemblées publiques, quelques lectures que l'indulgence, qui m'était

worthy of being inserted in the memoirs of the Institute. But forty years have now elapsed, during which I have been a stranger to this tribune; first, in consequence of frequent absence; then from duties, to which I felt bound to devote my whole time and attention; I must also add, from that discretion, which, in times of difficulty, is required of a man employed in public affairs; and finally, at a later period, from the infirmities, usually brought on, or at least aggravated, by age.

"At the present moment, I feel myself called upon to perform a duty, and to make a last appearance before this Assembly, in order that the memory of a man, known to the whole of Europe; —of a man whom I loved, and who, from the very

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accordée alors, a fait insérer dans les Mémoires de l'Institut. Depuis cette époque, quarante années se sont écoulées, durant lesquelles cette tribune m'a été comme interdite, d'abord par beaucoup d'absences ensuite par des fonctions auxquelles mon devoir était d'appartenir tout entier: je dois dire aussi, par la discrétion que les temps difficiles exigent d'un homme livré aux affaires; et enfin, plus tard, par les infirmités que la vieillesse amène d'ordinaire avec elle, ou du moins qu'elle aggrave toujours.

"Mais aujourd'hui j'éprouve le besoin, et je regarde comme un devoir de m'y présenter une dernière fois, pour que la mémoire d'un homme connu dans toute l'Europe, d'un homme que j'aimais, et qui, depuis la formation de l'Institut, était notre collègue, reçoive ici un témoignage

foundation of the Institute, has been our colleague, should receive here a public testimony of our esteem and regret. His position with respect to my own furnishes me with the means of speaking with authority of several of his merits. His principal, but I do not say his only, claim to distinction, consists of a correspondence of forty years, necessarily unknown to the public, and likely to remain so for ever. I asked myself, 'Who will mention this fact within these walls? who, especially, will consider himself under the obligation of directing your attention to it, if the task be not undertaken by me, to whom the greater part of this correspondence was addressed, to whom it always gave so much pleasure, and often so much assistance in those ministerial duties, which I had to perform during three reigns . . . . so very different in character?'

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public de notre estime et de nos regrets. Sa position et la mienne me mettent dans le cas de révéler plusieurs de ses mérites. Son principal, je ne dis pas son unique titre de gloire, consiste dans une correspondance de quarante années nécessairement ignorée du public, qui, très-probablement, n'en aura jamais connaissance. Je me suis dit : 'Qui en parlera dans cette enceinte? Qui sera surtout dans l'obligation d'en parler, si ce n'est moi, qui en ait reçu la plus grande part, à qui elle fut toujours si agréable, et souvent si utile dans les fonctions ministérielles que j'ai eues à remplir sous trois règnes . . . très-différents?'

"The first time I saw M. Reinhard, he was thirty, and I thirty-seven, years of age. He entered public life with the advantage of a large stock of acquired knowledge. He knew thoroughly five or six languages, and was familiar with their literature. He could have made himself remarkable as an historian, as a poet, or as a geographer; and it was in this last capacity that he became a member of the Institute, from the day it was founded.

"Already at this time he was a member of the Academy of Sciences of Göttingen. Born and educated in Germany, he had published in his youth several pieces of poetry, which had brought him under the notice of Gesner, Wieland, and Schiller. He was obliged at a later period to take the waters of Carlsbad, where he was so fortunate

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"Le comte Reinhard avait trente ans, et j'en avais trente-sept, quand je le vis pour le première fois. Il entrait aux affaires avec un grand fonds de connaissances acquises. Il savait bien cinq ou six langues dont les littératures lui étaient familières. Il eût pu se rendre célèbre comme poëte, comme historien, comme géographe; et c'est en cette qualité qu'il fut membre de l'Institut, des que l'Institut fut créé.

"Il était déjà à cette époque, membre de l'Académie des Sciences de Göttingen. Nè et élevé en Allemagne, il avait publié dans sa jeunesse quelques pièces de vers qui l'avaient fait remarquer par Gesner, par Wieland, par Schiller. Plus tard, obligé pour sa santé, de prendre les eaux de Carlsbad, il eut de bonheur d'y trouver et d'y voir souvent le

as to find himself frequently in the society of the celebrated Goethe, who appreciated his taste and acquirements sufficiently to request to be informed by him of everything that was creating a sensation in the French literary world. M. Reinhard promised to do so: engagements of this kind between men of a superior order are always reciprocal, and soon become ties of friendship; those formed between M. Reinhard and Goethe gave rise to a correspondence, which is now published in Germany.

"We learn from these letters that when he had arrived at that time of life, when it is necessary to select definitively the profession for which one feels most aptitude, M. Reinhard, before making his final decision, reflected seriously upon his natural disposition, his tastes, his own circumstances

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célèbre Göthe, qui apprécia assez son goût et ses connaissances pour désirer d'être averti par lui de tout ce qui faisait quelque sensation dans la littérature française. M. Reinhard le lui promit : les engagements de ce genre, entre les hommes d'un ordre superieur, sont toujours réciproques et deviennent bientôt des liens d'amitié : ceux qui se formèrent entre M. Reinhard et Göthe donnèrent lieu à une correspondance que l'on imprime aujourd'hui en Allemagne.

"On y verra, qu'arrivé à cette époque de la vie où il faut définitivement choisir un état M. Reinhard fit sur lui-même, sur les goûts, sur sa position et sur celle de sa famille un retour sérieux qui précéda sa détermination; et alors, chose remarquable pour le temps, à des car-

and those of his family; and then made a choice singular at that time, for instead of choosing a career that promised independence, he gave the preference to one in which it is impossible to secure it. The diplomatic career was selected by him, nor is it possible to blame him; qualified for all the duties of this profession, he has successively fulfilled them all, and each with distinction.

"And I would here venture to assert that he had been successfully prepared for the course he adopted by his early studies. He had been remarked as a proficient in theology at the Seminary of Denkendorf, and at that of the Protestant faculty of Tübingen, and it was to this science especially that he owed the power, and at the same time the subtlety, of reasoning, that abounds in all his writings. And to divest myself of the fear of

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rières où il eût pu être indépendant, il en préféra une où il ne pouvait l'être. C'est à la carrière diplomatique qu'il donna la préférence, et il fit bien: propre à tous les emplois de cette carrière, il les a successivement tous remplis, et tous avec distinction.

"Je hasarderai de dire ici que ses études premières l'y avait heureusement préparé. Celle de la théologie surtout, où il se fit remarquer dans le Séminaire de Denkendorf et dans celui de la faculté protestante de Tübingen, lui avait donné une force et en même temps une souplesse de raissonnement que l'on retrouve dans toutes les pièces qui sont sorties de sa plume. Et pour m'ôter à moi-même la crainte de me laisser

yielding to an idea which might appear paradoxical, I feel obliged to bring before you the names of several of our greatest diplomatists, who were at once theologians and celebrated in history for having conducted the most important political negotiations of their day. There was the chancellor, Cardinal Duprat, equally skilled in canon and civil law, who established with Leo X. the basis of the Concordat, of which several articles are still retained. Cardinal d'Ossat, who, in spite of the efforts made by several great powers, succeeded in effecting a reconciliation between Henry IV. and the Court of Rome. The study of his letters is still recommended at the present day to young men who are destined for political life. Cardinal de Polignac, a theologian, poet and diplomatist, who, after so many disastrous campaigns, was able to pre-

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aller à une idée qui pourrait paraître paradoxale, je me sens obligé de rappeler ici les noms de plusieurs de nos grands négociateurs, tous théologiens, et tous remarqués par l'histoire comme ayant conduit les affaires politiques les plus importantes de leurs temps : le cardinal chancelier Duprat aussi versé dans le droit canon que dans le droit civil, et qui fixa avec Léon X. les bases du concordat dont plusieurs dispositions subsistent encore aujourd'hui. Le cardinal d'Ossat, qui, malgré les efforts de plusieurs grandes puissances, parvint à réconcilier Henry IV. avec le cour de Rome. Le recueil de lettres qu'il a laissé est encore prescrit aujourd'hui aux jeunes gens qui se destinent à la carrière politique. Le cardinal de Polignac, théologien, poëte et négo-

serve, by the treaty of Utrecht, the conquests of Louis XIV. for France.

"It was also in the midst of works on theology, that his father, the Bishop of Gap, began the education of M. de Lyonne, whose name has just acquired a new lustre by a recent and important publication.

"The names I have just mentioned appear to me sufficient to justify my opinion that M. Reinhard's habits of thought were considerably influenced by the early studies to which his education had been directed by his father.

"On account of his solid, and, at the same time, various acquirements, he was called to Bordeaux, in order to discharge the honourable but modest duties of a tutor in a Protestant family of that

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ciateur, qui, après tant de guerres malheureuses sut conserver à la France, par le traité d'Utrecht, les conquêtes de Louis XIV.

"C'est aussi au milieu de livres de théologie qu'avait été commencée par son père, devenu évêque de Gap l'éducation de M. de Lyonne, dont le nom vient de recevoir un nouveau lustre par une récente et importante publication.

"Les noms que je viens de citer me paraissent suffire pour justifier l'influence qu'eurent, dans mon opinion, sur les habitudes d'esprit de M. Reinhard, les premières études vers lesquelles l'avait dirigé l'éducation paternelle.

"Les connaissances à la fois solides et variées qu'il y avait acquises l'avaient fait appeler à Bordeaux pour remplir les honorables et modestes fonctions de précepteur dans une famille protestante de cette ville. Là,

city. There he naturally became acquainted with several of those men whose talents, errors and death, have given so much celebrity to our first legislative assembly. M. Reinhard was easily persuaded by them to devote himself to the service of France.

"It is not necessary to follow him step by step through all the vicissitudes of his long career. In the succession of offices confided to him now of a higher, now of a lower order, there seems to be a sort of inconsistency and absence of regularity, which, at the present day, we should have some difficulty in conceiving. But, at that time, people were as free from prejudice with respect to places as to persons. At other periods, favour, and sometimes discernment, used to confer situations of

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il se trouva naturellement en relation des hommes dont le talent, les erreurs et la mort jetèrent tant d'éclat sur notre première assemblée législative. M. Reinhard se laissa facilement entraîner par eux à s'attacher au service de la France.

"Je ne m'astreindrai point à le suivre pas à pas à travers les vicissitudes dont fut remplie la longue carrière qu'il a parcourue. Dans les nombreux emplois que lui furent confiés, tantôt d'un ordre élevé, tantôt d'un ordre inférieur, il semblerait y avoir une sorte d'incohérence, et comme une absence de hiérarchie que nous aurions aujourd'hui de la peine à comprendre. Mais à cette époque il n'y avait pas plus de préjugés pour les places qu'il n'y en avait pour les personnes. Dans d'autres temps, la faveur, quelquefois le discernement, appelaient à toutes les

importance. But, in the days of which I speak, by fair means or foul, every place had to be won. Such a state of things very quickly leads to confusion.

"Thus, we find M. Reinhard first secretary of legation at London; occupying the same post at Naples; minister plenipotentiary to the Hanseatic towns of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck; chief clerk of the third division in the department of foreign affairs; minister plenipotentiary at Florence; minister of foreign affairs; minister plenipotentiary to the Helvetian Republic; consul-general at Milan; minister plenipotentiary to the Circle of Lower Saxony; president in the Turkish provinces beyond the Danube, and commissary-general of commercial relations in Moldavia;

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situations éminentes. Dans le temps dont je parle, bien ou mal, toutes les situations étaient conquises. Un pareil état de choses mène bien vite à la confusion.

"Aussi, nous voyons M. Reinhard, premier secrétaire de la légation à Londres; occupant le même emploi à Naples; ministre plénipotentiaire auprès des villes anséatiques, Hambourg, Brême et Lubeck; chef de la troisième division au département des affaires étrangères; ministre plénipotentiaire à Florence; ministre des relations extérieures; ministre plénipotentiaire en Helvétie; consul-général à Milan; ministre plénipotentiaire près le cercle de Basse-Saxe; président dans les provinces turques au delà du Danube, et commissaire-général des relations commerciales en Moldavie; ministre plénipotentiaire auprès du roi de Westphalie; directeur de

minister plenipotentiary to the King of Westphalia; director of the *Chancellerie* in the department of foreign affairs; minister plenipotentiary to the Germanic Diet and the free city of Frankfort; and, finally, minister plenipotentiary at Dresden.

"What a number of places, of charges, and of interests, all confided to one man, and at a time, when his talents appeared to be all the less appreciated because war alone seemed to monopolise business of every description!

"You do not expect me, gentlemen, to give here a detailed account of all M. Reinhard's labours in the various employments, which I have just enumerated. This would require a volume.

"I have only to call your attention to the manner

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la chancellerie du département des affaires étrangères; ministre plénipotentiaire auprès de la diète germanique, et de la ville libre de Frankfort, et, enfin, ministre plénipotentiaire à Dresde.

"Que de places, que d'emplois, que d'intérêts confiés à un seul homme, et cela, à une époque où les talents paraissaient devoir être d'autant moins appréciés que la guerre semblait, à elle seule, se charger de toutes les affaires!

"Vous n'attendez donc pas de moi, Messieurs, qu'ici je vous rende compte en détail, et date par date, de tous les travaux de M. Reinhard dans les différents emplois dont vous venez d'entendre l'énumération. Il faudrait faire un livre.

"Je ne dois parler devant vous que de la manière dont il comprenait les fonctions qu'il avait à remplir, qu'il fût chef de division, ministre, ou consul

in which he regarded the duties he had to perform whether as chief clerk, minister, or consul.

" Although M. Reinhard did not possess at that time the advantage which he might have had a few years later of being able to study excellent examples, he was already perfectly aware of the numerous and various qualities that ought to distinguish a chief clerk in the foreign office. A delicate tact had made him feel that the habits of a chief clerk ought to be simple, regular, and retired; that, a stranger to the bustle of the world, he ought to live solely for his duty, and devote to it an impenetrable secrecy; that, always prepared to give an answer respecting facts or men, he must have every treaty fresh in his memory, know its historical date, appreciate its strong and weak points, its antecedents and consequences, and finally be ac-

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" Quoique M. Reinhard n'eût point alors l'avantage qu'il aurait eu quelques années plus tard, de trouver sous ses yeux d'excellents modèles, il savait déjà combien de qualités, et de qualités diverses, devaient distinguer un chef de division des affaires étrangères. Un tact délicat lui avait fait sentir que les mœurs d'un chef de division devaient être simples, régulières, retirées; qu'étranger au tumulte du monde, il devait vivre uniquement pour les affaires et leur vouer un secret impénétrable; que, toujours prêt à répondre sur les faits et sur les hommes, il devait avoir sans cesse présents à la mémoire tous les traités, connaître historiquement leurs dates, apprécier avec justesse leurs côtés forts et leurs côtés faibles, leurs antécédents et leurs conséquences; savoir,

quainted with the names of its principal negotiators, and even with their family connections; that, in making use of this knowledge, he ought, at the same time, to be cautious not to offend a minister's self-esteem, always so sensitive, and, even when he should have influenced the opinion of his chief, to leave his success in the shade; for he knew that he was to shine only by a reflected light. Still, he was aware that much consideration would be the reward of so pure and modest a life.

"M. Reinhard's power of observation did not stop here; it had taught him to understand how rare is the union of qualities necessary to make a minister of foreign affairs. Indeed, a minister of foreign affairs ought to be gifted with a sort of instinct, which should be always prompting him,

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enfin les noms des principaux négociateurs, et même leurs relations de famille; que, tout en faisant usage de ces connaissances, il devait prendre garde à inquiéter l'amour-propre toujours si clairvoyant du ministre, et qu'alors même qu'il l'entraînait à son opinion, son succès devait rester dans l'ombre; car il savait qu'il ne devait briller que d'un éclat réfléchi; mais il savait aussi que beaucoup de considération s'attachait naturellement à une vie aussi pure et aussi modeste.

"L'esprit d'observation de M. Reinhard ne s'arrêtait point là; il l'avait conduit à comprendre combien la réunion des qualités nécessaires à un ministre des affaires étrangères est rare. Il faut, en effet, qu'un ministre des affaires étrangères soit doué d'une sorte d'instinct qui, l'avertissant promptement, l'empêche, avant toute discussion, de jamais

and thus guarding him, when entering into any discussion, from the danger of committing himself. It is requisite that he should possess the faculty of appearing open, while remaining impenetrable; of masking reserve with the manner of frankness; of showing talent even in the choice of his amusements. His conversation should be simple, varied, unexpected, always natural, and at times *naïve*; in a word, he should never cease for an instant during the twenty-four hours to be a minister of foreign affairs.

"Yet all these qualities, however rare, might not suffice, if they did not find in sincerity a guarantee which they almost always require. I must not omit to notice here this fact, in order to destroy a prejudice, into which people are very apt to fall. No! diplomacy is not a science of craft and dupli-

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se compromettre. Il lui faut la faculté de se montrer ouvert en restant impénétrable; d'être réservé avec les formes de l'abandon, d'être habile jusque dans le choix de ses distractions; il faut que sa conversation soit simple, variée, inattendue, toujours naturelle et parfois naïve; en un mot, il ne doit pas cesser un moment, dans les vingt-quatre heures, d'être ministre des affaires étrangères.

"Cependant, tout ces qualités, quelque rares qu'elles soient, pourraient n'être pas suffisantes, si la bonne foi ne leur donnait une garantie dont elles ont presque toujours besoin. Je dois le rappeler ici, pour détruire un préjugé assez généralement répandu: non, la diplomatie n'est point une science de ruse et de duplicité. Si la bonne foi est nécessaire quel-

city. If sincerity be anywhere requisite, it is especially so in political transactions; for it is that which makes them solid and durable. It has pleased people to confound reserve with cunning. Sincerity never authorizes cunning, but it admits of reserve; and reserve has this peculiarity, that it increases confidence.

"If he be governed by the honour and interests of his country, by the honour and interests of his sovereign, by the love of a liberty based upon order and the rights of all men, a minister of foreign affairs, who knows how to fill his post, finds himself thus in the noblest position to which a superior mind can aspire.

"After having been a distinguished minister, how many things more must be known to make a good consul! For there is no end to the variety of a

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que part, c'est surtout dans les transactions politiques, car c'est elle qui les rend solides et durables. On a voulu confondre la réserve avec la ruse. La bonne foi n'autorise jamais la ruse, mais elle admet la réserve; et la réserve a cela de particulier, c'est qu'elle ajoute à la confiance.

"Dominé par l'honneur et l'intérêt du prince, par l'amour de la liberté, fondé sur l'ordre et sur les droits de tous, un ministre des affaires étrangères, quand il sait l'être, se trouve ainsi placé dans la plus belle situation à laquelle un esprit élevé puisse prétendre.

"Après avoir été un ministre habile, que de choses il faut encore savoir pour un bon consul! Car les attributions d'un consul sont variées à l'infini; elles sont d'un genre tout différent de celles des autres

consul's attributions; and they are perfectly distinct from those of the other persons employed in foreign affairs. They demand a vast amount of practical knowledge which can only be acquired by a peculiar education. Consuls are called upon to discharge, for the advantage of their countrymen, and over the extent of their jurisdiction, the functions of judges, arbitrators, and promoters of reconciliation; it frequently happens that they are employed in other civil capacities; they perform the duties of notaries, sometimes those of naval administrators; they examine and pronounce upon sanitary questions; it is they who are enabled, by their numerous professional connections to give correct and perfect notions respecting the state of commerce or navigation, or of the manufactures peculiar to the country where they reside. Accordingly, as M. Reinhard never neglected anything which

employés des affaires étrangères. Elles exigent une foule de connaissances pratiques pour lesquelles une éducation particulière est nécessaire. Les consuls sont dans le cas d'exercer, dans l'étendue de leur arrondissement, vis-à-vis de leurs compatriotes, les fonctions de juges, d'arbitres, de conciliateurs; souvent ils sont officiers de l'état civil; ils remplissent l'emploi de notaires, quelquefois celui d'administrateur de la marine; ils surveillent et constatent l'état sanitaire; ce sont eux qui, par leurs relations habituelles, peuvent donner une idée juste et complète de la situation du commerce, de la navigation et de l'industrie particulière au pays de leur résidence. Aussi M. Reinhard, qui ne négligeait rien pour

might confirm the accuracy of the information required by his government, or the justice of the decisions which he had to pronounce as a political agent, as a consular agent, or as a naval administrator, he made a profound study of international and maritime law. It was owing to this study, that he became persuaded that the day would come when, by skilful political combinations, a universal system of commerce and navigation would be inaugurated, which would respect the interests of all nations, and be established on such foundations that war itself would be powerless to assail its principles, even were it able to suspend some of its effects.

"He had also learned to resolve, with accuracy and promptitude, every question connected with exchange, arbitration, valuation of money, weights

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s'assurer de la justesse des informations qu'il était dans la cas de donner à son gouvernement, et des décisions qu'il devait prendre comme agent politique, comme agent consulaire, comme administrateur de la marine, avait-il fait une étude approfondie du droit des gens et du droit maritime. Cette étude l'avait conduit à croire qu'il arriverait un temps où, par des combinaisons habilement préparées, il s'établirait un système général de commerce et de navigation, dans lequel les intérêts de toutes les nations seraient respectés, et dont les bases fussent telles que la guerre elle-même n'en pût altérer le principe, dût-elle suspendre quelques-unes de ses conséquences. Il était aussi parvenu à résoudre avec sureté et promptitude toutes les questions de change, d'arbitrage,

and measures; and all this without a single dispute ever having arisen from the information he had supplied, or the judgments he had pronounced. But it is also true that the personal consideration, which accompanied him during his whole career, gave a weight to his interference, in every question that required his assistance, and in all arbitrations where he had to give a decision.

"But, however extensive may be a man's information, however vast his capacity, there is nothing so rare as a complete diplomatist. We should perhaps have found one in M. Reinhard if he had possessed but one qualification more. He observed well, and understood well; when he took up his pen, he could give an admirable account of what he had seen and heard. His written language was

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de conversion de monnaies, de poids et mesures, et tout cela sans que jamais aucune réclamation se soit élevée contre les informations qu'il avait données et contre les jugements qu'il avait rendus. Il est vrai aussi que la considération personnelle qu'il l'a suivi dans toute sa carrière donnait du poids à son intervention dans toutes les affaires dont il se mêlait et à tous les arbitrages sur lesquels il avait à prononcer.

"Mais, quelque étendues que soient les connaissances d'un homme, quelque vaste que soit sa capacité, être un diplomate complet est bien rare; et cependant M. Reinhard l'aurait peut-être été, s'il eut en une qualité de plus; il voyait bien, il entendait bien; la plume à la main, il rendait admirablement compte de le qu'il avait vu, de ce qui lui avait été dit. Sa parole écrite était abondante, facile, spirituelle,

ready, abundant, witty, and pointed. Thus we find that, of all the diplomatic correspondence of my time, none was preferred to that of Count Reinhard by the Emperor Napoleon, who had the right, and was under the necessity, of being difficult to please. But this eloquent writer was embarrassed when he had to speak. To carry out his intentions, his mind required more time than ordinary conversation affords. To express his thoughts with facility, it was necessary for him to be alone, and not interfered with.

"In spite of this serious difficulty, M. Reinhard always succeeded in doing, and doing well, whatever was intrusted to him. How, then, did he find the means of succeeding? whence did he derive the principle that inspired him?

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piquante; aussi, de toutes les correspondances diplomatiques de mon temps, il n'y en avait aucune à laquelle l'empereur Napoléon, qui avait le droit el le besoin d'être difficile, ne préférat celle du comte Reinhard. Mais ce même homme qui écrivait à merveille s'exprimait avec difficülte. Pour accomplir ses actes, son intelligence demand-ait plus de temps qu'elle n'en pouvait obtenir dans le conversation. Pour que sa parole interne pût se reproduire facilement, il fallait qu'il fût seul et sans intermédiaire.

"Malgré cet inconvénient réel, M. Reinhard réussit toujours à faire, et bien faire, tout ce dont il était chargé. Où donc trouvait-il ses moyens de réussir, où prenait-il ses inspirations?

"He received it, gentlemen, from a deep and true feeling, which guided all his actions—from the sense of duty. People are not sufficiently aware of the power derived from this feeling. A life wholly devoted to duty is very easily diverted from ambition; and that of M. Reinhard was entirely taken up by his professional avocations, while he never was influenced in the slightest degree by an interested motive or a pretension to premature advancement.

"This worship of duty, to which M. Reinhard continued faithful to the end of his days, comprised entire acquiescence in the orders of his superiors—indefatigable vigilance which, joined to much penetration, never suffered them to remain ignorant of anything which it was expedient for them to know

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"Il les prenait, Messieurs, dans un sentiment vrai et profond qui gouvernait toutes ses actions, dans le sentiment du devoir. On ne sait pas assez tout ce qu'il y a de puissance dans ce sentiment. Une vie tout critière au devoir est bien aisément dégagée d'ambition. La vie de M. Reinhard était uniquement employée aux fonctions qu'il avait à remplir, sans que jamais chez lui il y eût trace de calcul personnel ni de prétention à quelque avancement précipite.

"Cette religion du devoir, à laquelle M. Reinhard fut fidèle tout sa vie, consistait en une soumission exacte aux instructions et aux ordres de ses chefs; dans une vigilance de tous les moments, qui, jointe a beaucoup de perspicacité, ne les laissait jamais dans l'ignorance de ce qu'il leur importait de savoir; en une rigoureuse véracité dans tous ses rapports,

—strict truthfulness in all his reports, however unpleasing their contents—faultless discretion—regular habits which inspired esteem and confidence—a style of living suited to his position—and finally, constant attention in giving to the acts of his government the form and lucidity which their importance demanded.

"Although age seemed to invite M. Reinhard to seek the repose of private life, he would never have asked permission to retire from active employment, so much did he fear to be thought lukewarm in the duties of a profession which had occupied the greater part of his days.

"It was necessary that his Majesty's ever-thoughtful benevolence should have providently intervened to place this great servant of France in a most honourable position, by calling him to the Chamber of Peers.

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qu'ils dussent être agréeables ou déplaisants; dans une discrétion impénétrable, dans une régularité de vie qui appelait la confiance et l'estime; dans une représentation décente, enfin dans un soin constant à donner aux actes de son gouvernement la couleur et les explications que réclamait l'intérêt des affaires qu'il avait a traiter.

"Quoique l'âge eût marqué pour M. Reinhard le temps du repos, il n'aurait jamais demandé sa retraite, tant il aurait crainte de montrer de la tiédeur a servir dans une carrière qui avait été celle de toute sa vie.

"Il a fallu que la bienveillance royale, toujours si attentive, fut pré-

"Count Reinhard enjoyed this honour during too short a time. He died suddenly on the 25th of December, 1837.

"M. Reinhard was twice married. By his first wife he has left a son who is now following a political career. To the son of such a man the best wish that we can form is that he may resemble his father."

The force of nature, which a long life had exhausted in a variety of ways, seemed now unequal to any further struggle.

A disease, which at Prince Talleyrand's time of life was almost certain to be fatal, and which had already made its appearance, assumed a more formidable character.

An operation was advised. The prince submitted to it, and bore it with a fortitude that surprised even those who most knew the stoicism which he on all occasions affected and usually practised.

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voyante pour lui, et donnât à ce grand serviteur de la France la situation la plus honorable en l'appellant à la chambre des pairs.

"M. le comte Reinhard n'a pas joui assez longtemps de cet honneur, et il est mort presque subitement le 25 décembre, 1837.

"M. Reinhard s'était marié deux fois. Il a laissé du premier lit un fils qui est aujourd'hui dans la carrière politique. Au fils d'un tel père, tout ce qu'on peut souhaiter de mieux, c'est de lui ressembler."

Dangerous symptoms, however, soon followed, and his physician judged it an act of duty to warn him that his disorder might be fatal.

He was urged indeed to do so by the noble patient's family, who were especially anxious that he should die in peace with the church; and when convinced that he could not recover, he assented to all that was asked of him, in this respect, as a favour that could do him no harm, and was agreeable to those about him.

The following account of his last moments is given by a person who was present at them: "When I entered the chamber where reposed the veteran statesman, he had fallen into a profound slumber, from which some amendment was augured by the physicians. The slumber, or rather lethargy, had continued for about an hour after my arrival, when it became curious to observe the uneasiness which was manifested, as time drew on, even by those dearest and nearest, lest this repose, however salutary, should endure beyond the hour fixed for the King's visit, for the sovereign intended to pay M. de Talleyrand this last homage.

"With some difficulty he was at last aroused and made to comprehend the approaching ceremony, and hardly was he lifted from his reclining position

and placed at the edge of the bed, when Louis Philippe, accompanied by Madame Adelaide, entered the apartment. 'I am sorry, Prince, to see you suffering so much,' said the King, in a low tremulous voice, rendered almost inaudible by apparent emotion. 'Sire, you have come to witness the sufferings of a dying man; and those who love him can have but one wish, that of seeing them shortly at an end.' This was uttered by M. de Talleyrand in that deep strong voice so peculiar to himself, and which the approach of death had not the power to weaken.

"The royal visit, like all royal visits of a disagreeable nature, was of the shortest duration possible. Indeed, the position was to all parties embarrassing and painful. Louis Philippe rose, after an effort and some few words of consolation, to take his leave; and not even at this last moment did the old prince lose his wonted presence of mind, nor forget a duty which the etiquette he had been bred in dictated—that of introducing those formally to the sovereign who found themselves in his presence. Slightly rising, then, he mentioned by name his physician, his secretary, his principal valet, and his own private doctor, and then observed slowly: 'Sire, our house has received

this day an honour worthy to be inscribed in our annals, and which my successors will remember with pride and gratitude.' It was shortly afterwards that the first symptoms of dissolution were observed, and the whole family were in consequence summoned around him. Few of them were admitted to his chamber; but the adjoining room was crowded, and exhibited a strange scene for one so near the bed of death.

"The flower of the society of Paris was there. On one side old and young politicians, grey-headed statesmen, were gathered round the blazing fire, and engaged in eager conversation; on another was to be seen a coterie of younger gentlemen and ladies, whose sidelong looks and low pleasant whispers formed a sad contrast to the dying groans of the neighbouring sufferer.

"Presently, the conversation stopped; the hum of voices was at an end. There was a solemn pause, and every eye turned towards the slowly-opening door of the prince's chamber. A domestic entered, with downcast looks and swollen eyes, and advancing towards Dr. C——, who like myself had just then sought an instant's relief in the drawing-room, whispered a few words in his ear. He arose instantly, and entered the prince's

chamber. The natural precipitation with which this movement was executed but too plainly revealed its cause. There was an instantaneous rush to the door of the apartment within which M. de Talleyrand was seated on the side of his bed, supported in the arms of his secretary. It was evident that Death had set his seal upon that marble brow; yet I was struck with the still existing vigour of the countenance. It seemed as if all the life which had once sufficed to furnish the whole being was now contained in the brain. From time to time he raised up his head, throwing back with a sudden movement the long grey locks which impeded his sight, and gazed around; and then, as if satisfied with the result of his examination, a smile would pass across his features, and his head would again fall upon his bosom. He saw death approach neither with shrinking nor with fear, nor yet with any affectation of scorn or defiance.

"If there be truth in the assertion, that it is a satisfaction to die amidst friends and relations, then, indeed, must his last feeling towards the world he was for ever quitting have been one of entire approbation and content, for he expired (on the 17th of May, 1838) amidst regal pomp and reverence; and of all those whom he, perhaps,

would have himself called together, none were wanting.

"The friend of his maturity, the fair young idol of his age, were gathered on bended knee beside his bed, and if the words of comfort whispered by the murmuring priest failed to reach his ear, it was because the sound was stifled by the lower wailings of those he had loved so well. Scarcely, however, had those eyes, whose every glance had been watched so long, and with such deep interest, for ever closed, when a sudden change came over the scene.

"One would have thought that a flight of crows had suddenly taken wing, so great was the precipitation with which each one hurried from the hotel, in the hope of being first to spread the news amongst the particular set or coterie of which he or she happened to be the oracle. Ere nightfall, that chamber, which all the day had been crowded to excess, was abandoned to the servants of the tomb; and, when I entered in the evening, I found the very arm-chair, whence I had so often heard the prince launch the courtly jest or stinging epigram, occupied by a hired priest, whispering prayers for the repose of the departed soul."

XI.

M. de Talleyrand was buried at Valençay, in the chapel of the Sisters of St. André, founded by himself, and in which he had already placed the family vault.

His career and character have been gradually developed in this sketch, so that there remains little to say of them here. They were both, as I elsewhere observed, coloured by their times, and must be regarded in connection with an epoch of social immorality and constant political change. Many of his faults were so inherent in that epoch, that, although they justly merit blame (for vice and virtue should be independent of custom and example), they also admit of excuse.

As to the variety of political parts which he played in the different scenes of the great drama which lasted half a century, one is daily seeing changes so extraordinary and so rapid amongst the most respectable public men of our own day, and even of our own country, that it would be absurd not to acknowledge that, when years run rapidly through changeful events, we must expect to find those whose career is embarked on them, adopting

rapidly different opinions. The stiff consistent character is of the middle ages.

At the commencement of the great Revolution of 1789, M. de Talleyrand took the liberal side in politics; a strong party of his own rank and profession did not do so, but many of the most illustrious did; and with the best motives. A certain interval elapsed; the monarchy was overthrown; a reign of madness and terror succeeded it; and, emerging from this sanguinary obscurity, men were just beginning to adopt some elements of order, which they brought together under the name of a Republic.

It is hardly for us (who have with our own eyes seen Frenchmen of high rank and generally acknowledged honour, even the personal friends of a deposed sovereign, become, within a few days after his fall, Republicans; and within a few years the confidential leaders of another dynasty) to judge with any great severity a Frenchman, who, returning to France at the time at which M. de Talleyrand revisited it, consented to serve the Directory. Neither can we be surprised, when it appeared evident that under the Directory things were again approaching the state of terror and confusion, of which so horrible a recollection

still existed, that M. de Talleyrand preferred the government of one man to the want of any government at all—the organization of society under a temporary despotism, to its utter and radical decomposition. By and by, license and disorder being vanquished, moderate and regular notions as to liberty grew up; the dictator then appeared the tyrant,—and the fortunate soldier, the military gambler after fortune. This soldier converted the nation into an army, and his army was beaten: and M. de Talleyrand aided in reviving that nation, and giving it the framework of a constitutional system, under a legitimate monarchy;—almost, in fact, that very system which thirty-five years before he had wished to see established. Years rolled on and seemed to bring with them the renewal of the old maxim, that "Restorations are impossible." The royal *émigré*, pointedly described as having forgotten nothing and learned nothing during his misfortunes, had not sufficiently imbibed the spirit of a new society which had risen up since his youth, and which had neither the customs nor inclinations on which he considered that a monarchy should be maintained.

Charles X.'s views created suspicions which his

acts, greatly exaggerated by those suspicions, hardly justified. But the knowledge that he thought that public liberty depended solely on his will, made the slightest movement towards controlling that liberty—dangerous.

The crown fell into the gutters of Paris. The government which most resembled the one which was overturned was still a monarchy with a monarch taken from the same family as the one deposed, but who was willing to accept his kingdom as a gift of the French nation and could not pretend to it as a legitimate right. M. de Talleyrand helped to form such a government.

It cannot be said that he departed in this case from his principles, though he changed his allegiance.

In fact, I hardly think, looking calmly and dispassionately at each of the epochs I have thus rapidly passed over, that any sensible and moderate man will deny that the side taken by M. de Talleyrand was the one on which, in every instance, lay good sense and moderation. It cannot be said that in the various changes that marked his career, he ever acted disinterestedly; but at the same time it may be urged that every time he accepted office he did thereby a real ser-

vice to the cause he espoused, and even to the country to which he belonged.

There can be no doubt that at the first establishment of something like order and government under the Republic, the relations of France with foreign powers were considerably strengthened by a man of M. de Talleyrand's birth and well-known acquirements and abilities being selected as minister of foreign affairs. It is also undeniable that, during the Consulate and early part of the Empire, the experience, sagacity, and tact of the accomplished diplomatist were eminently useful to the young, half-educated, and impetuous warrior whose fiery genius had placed him at the head of the State. To Louis XVIII. M. de Talleyrand's assistance, when that sovereign recovered his throne, was invaluable, and Louis Philippe derived in no small degree, as I have already noticed, the respect which foreign governments paid so promptly to his suddenly-acquired authority from the fact that M. de Talleyrand had consented to undertake the embassy to London. I must likewise here repeat that to which I have elsewhere called attention. No party had to complain of treachery or ingratitude from this statesman so frequently stigmatised as fickle. The

course he took at the different periods of his eventful life was that which seemed natural to the position in which he found himself, and the one which both friend and foe expected from him. His defections were from those whose policy he had been previously opposing, and whose views the higher order of intellects in his country condemned at the time that his own hostility commenced. Indeed, the rule of his conduct and the cause of his success may be pretty generally found in his well-known and profound maxim, that "The thoughts of the greatest number of intelligent persons in any time or country, are sure, with a few more or less fluctuations, to become in the end the public opinion of their age or community."

It must, however, be confessed that there is something to an honest nature displeasing in the history of a statesman who has served various masters and various systems, and appeared as the champion of each cause at the moment of its triumph. Reason may excuse, explain, or defend such versatility, but no generous sympathy calls upon us to applaud or recommend it.

The particular and especial talent of M. de Talleyrand was, as I have more than once exemplified, his tact; the art of seizing the im-

portant point in an affair—the peculiar characteristic of an individual, the genius and tendency of an epoch! His other qualities were accessories to this dominant quality, but of an inferior order and in an inferior degree.

His great good fortune was to have been absent from France during the horrors of the Committee of Public Safety; his great merit, to have served governments when in serving them he served the public interests. His great defect, a love of money, or rather a want of scruple as to how he obtained it. I never heard any clear justification of his great wealth, though that which, it is said, he gave to Bonaparte, "I bought stock before the 18th Brumaire, and sold it the day afterwards," has wit and *à propos* to recommend it. His great calamity was to have been minister of foreign affairs at the moment of the execution of the Duc d'Enghien; and the most inexplicable part of his conduct, his declaration in England that he had nothing to do with the provisional government of Danton, and the declaration of M. de Chénier's in Paris—a declaration that M. de Talleyrand himself subsequently confirmed—that he went to England as Danton's agent.

An extract from the *Moniteur*, the 27th of May,

1838, page 1412, quoting an extract from the *Gazette des Tribunaux*, is worth preserving:*

"We have already said that in the sequel to the will of Prince Talleyrand was found a sort of manifesto, in which the celebrated diplomatist asserted the principles which had guided him in his political life, and explained his way of looking at certain events.

"According to various facts we have collected, the following is the substance of that declaration, which is dated in 1836, and which, in accordance with the wish of the testator, has been read to the family and assembled friends.

"The prince declares that before all things, and to all things, he had preferred the true interests of France.

"Explaining himself on the part he had taken

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* "Nous avons dit qu'à la suite du testament du prince de Talleyrand se trouvait une sorte de manifeste, dans lequel le célèbre diplomate exposait les principes qui l'avaient guidé dans sa vie politique, et exprimait sa manière de voir à l'égard de certains événements.

"Voici, d'après les renseignements que nous avons recueillis, ce que contient en substance cette déclaration, qui porte la date de 1836, et qui, conformément au vœu du testateur, a été lue à la famille et à ses amis assemblés.

"Le prince déclare qu'avant tout et à tout, il a préféré les vrais intérêts de la France.

in the return of the Bourbons in 1814, he says that, in his opinion, the Bourbons did not re-ascend the throne in virtue of a pre-existing and hereditary right; and he gives us, moreover, to understand that his counsels and advice were never wanting to enlighten them on their true position, and on the conduct which they ought to have followed in consequence.

"He repels the reproach of having betrayed Napoleon; if he abandoned him, it was when he discovered that he could no longer blend, as he had up to that time done, France and the Emperor in the same affection. *This was not without a lively feeling of sorrow, for he owed to Napoleon nearly all his fortune. He enjoins his heirs never to forget these obligations, to tell them to their children,*

"S'expliquant sur la part qu'il a prise à la rentrée des Bourbons en 1814, il dit que, dans son opinion, les Bourbons ne remontaient pas sur le trône en vertu d'un droit héréditaire, et pré-existant, et il donne même à entendre que ses conseils et ses avis ne leur manquèrent pas pour les éclairer sur leur vraie position, et sur la conduite qu'ils devaient tenir en conséquence.

"Il repousse le reproche d'avoir trahi Napoléon: s'il l'a abandonné, c'est lorsqu'il reconnut qu'il ne pouvait plus confondre, comme il l'avait fait jusqu'alors, la France et l'Empereur dans une même affection; ce ne fut pas sans un vif sentiment de douleur, car il lui devait à peu près toute sa fortune; il engage ses héritiers à ne jamais l'oublier, à le répéter à leurs enfants, et ceux-ci à ceux qui naîtront d'eux, afin, dit-il,

and to instruct these, again, to tell them to their offspring; so that if some day a man of the name of Bonaparte should be found in want of assistance, he shoultl always find it in the family of Talleyrand.

"Replying to those who reproached him for having served successively all governments, he observes that he had done so without the least scruple, guided by the idea that, in whatever situation the country might be, there were always means of doing it some good, and that to do this good was the business of a statesman."

Supposing the testament thus spoken of to exist, it is curious; and the expression of gratitude to the Bonaparte family is the more creditable from the fact that it could not have been made with any idea that it would be rewarded.

As to the defence set up for serving all dynasties and all causes, it cannot apply to any country where public men have the power, out of office, to put

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que si quelque jour un homme du nom de Bonaparte se trouvait dans le besoin, ils s'empressassent de lui donner aide, secours et assistance.

"Répondant à ceux qui lui reprochent d'avoir servi successivement tous les gouvernements, il déclare qu'il ne s'en est fait aucun scrupule, et qu'il a agi ainsi, guidé par cette pensée que, dans quelque situation que fût un pays, il y avait toujours moyen de lui faire du bien, et que c'était à opérer ce bien que devait s'appliquer un homme d'état."

down a bad government, as they have in office the power to uphold a good one.

I will conclude with the appreciation of a French friend, who thus summed up many of my own remarks :—

"Enfin, chez M. de Talleyrand, l'aménité et la raison remplaçaient le cœur, et la conscience. Avec bien des défauts qui ont terni sa réputation, il avait toutes les qualités qui devaient faire prospérer son ambition. Ses talents qu'il a employés constamment pour son propre avantage, il les a employés presque aussi constamment pour le bien public. Beaucoup attaqué et peu défendu par ses contemporains, il n'en restera pas moins pour la postérité un des hommes les plus aimables de son temps et un des citoyens les plus illustres de son pays."

APPENDIX.

TWO MEMOIRS, READ BY M. DE TALLEYRAND AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE.

APPENDIX.

Essai sur les avantages à retirer de colonies nouvelles dans les circonstances présentes. Par le CITOYEN TALLEYRAND. *Lu à la séance publique, de l'Institut national, le* 25 *messidor, an V.*

LES hommes qui ont médité sur la nature des rapports qui unissent les métropoles aux colonies, ceux qui sont accoutumés à lire de loin les événements politiques dans leurs causes, prévoyaient depuis longtemps que les colonies américaines se séparaient un jour de leurs métropoles, et, par une tendance naturelle que les vices des Européens n'ont que trop accélérée, ou se réuniront entre elles, ou s'attacheront au continent qui les avoisine : ainsi le veut cette force des choses qui fait la destinée des états, et à laquelle rien ne résiste.

Si de tels événements sont inévitables, il faut du moins en retarder l'époque et mettre à profit le temps qui nous en sépare.

Des mesures désastreuses ont porté dans nos colonies la dévastation. L'humanité, la justice, la politique même, commandent impérieusement que, par des mesures fermes et sages, on s'efforce enfin de réparer ces ruines.

Mais, en même temps, ne convient-il pas de jeter les yeux sur d'autres contrées, et d'y préparer l'établissement de colonies nouvelles, dont les liens avec nous seront plus naturels, plus utiles et plus durables ? car il faut bien que le système de notre gouvernement intérieur amène dans nos rapports étrangers des changements qui lui soient analogues.

L'effet nécessaire d'une constitution libre est de tendre sans cesse à tout ordonner, en elle et hors d'elle, pour l'intérêt de l'espèce humaine : l'effet nécessaire d'un gouvernement arbitraire est de tendre sans cesse à tout ordonner, en lui et hors de lui, pour l'intérêt particulier de ceux qui gouvernent. D'après ces tendances opposées, il est incontestable que rien de commun ne peut exister longtemps pour les moyens, puisque rien de commun n'existait pour l'objet.

La tyrannie s'irrite des regrets alors qu'ils se manifestent ; l'indifférence ne les entend pas : la bonté les accueille avec intérêt ; la politique leur cherche un contre-poids : or le contre-poids des regrets, c'est l'espoir.

Les anciens avaient imaginé le fleuve de l'oubli, où se perdaient, au sortir de la vie, tous les souvenirs. Le véritable Léthé, au sortir d'une révolution, est dans tout ce qui ouvre aux hommes les routes de l'espérance.

" Toutes les mutations," dit Machiavel, " fournissent de quoi en faire une autre." Ce mot est juste et profond.

En effet, sans parler des haines qu'elles éternisent et des motifs de vengeance qu'elles déposent dans les âmes, les révolutions qui ont tout remué, celles surtout auxquelles tout le monde a pris part, laissent, après elles, une inquiétude générale dans les esprits, un besoin de mouvement, une disposition vague aux entreprises hasardeuses, et une

ambition dans les idées, qui tend sans cesse à changer et à détruire.

Cela est vrai, surtout quand la révolution s'est faite au nom de la liberté. "Un gouvernement *libre*," dit quelque part Montesquieu, "c'est-à-dire, *toujours agité*, &c." Une telle agitation ne pouvant pas être étouffée, il faut la régler; il faut qu'elle s'exerce non aux dépens, mais au profit du bonheur public.

Après les crises révolutionnaires, il est des hommes fatigués et vieillis sous l'impression du malheur, dont il faut en quelque sorte rajeunir l'âme. Il en est qui voudroient ne plus aimer leur pays, à qui il faut faire sentir qu'heureusement cela est impossible.

Le temps et de bonnes lois produiront sans doute d'heureux changements; mais il faut aussi des établissements combinés avec sagesse: car le pouvoir des lois est borné, et le temps détruit indifféremment le bien et le mal.

Lorsque j'étais en Amérique, je fus frappé de voir qu'après une révolution, à la vérité très-dissemblable de la nôtre, il restait aussi peu de traces d'anciennes haines, aussi peu d'agitation, d'inquiétude; enfin qu'il n'y avait aucun de ces symptômes qui, dans les états devenus libres, menacent à chaque instant la tranquillité. Je ne tardai pas à en découvrir une des principales causes. Sans doute cette révolution a, comme les autres, laissé dans les âmes des dispositions à exciter ou à recevoir de nouveaux troubles; mais ce besoin d'agitation a pu se satisfaire autrement dans un pays vaste et nouveau, où des projets aventureux amorcent les esprits, où une immense quantité de terres incultes leur donne la facilité d'aller employer loin du théâtre des premières dissensions une activité nouvelle, de placer des espérances dans des spéculations lointaines,

de se jeter à la fois au milieu d'une foule d'essais, de se fatiguer enfin par des déplacements, et d'amortir ainsi chez eux les passions révolutionnaires.

Heureusement le sol que nous habitons ne présente pas les mêmes ressources : mais des colonies nouvelles, choisies et établies avec discernement, peuvent nous les offrir; et ce motif pour s'en occuper ajoute une grande force à ceux qui sollicitent déjà l'attention publique sur ce genre d'établissements.

Les diverses causes qui ont donné naissance aux colonies dont l'histoire nous a transmis l'origine, n'étaient pas plus déterminantes ; la plupart furent beaucoup moins pures ; ainsi l'ambition, l'ardeur des conquêtes, portèrent les premières colonies des Phéniciens* et des Egyptiens dans la Grèce ; la violence, celle des Tyriens à Carthage† ; les malheurs de la guerre, celle des Troyens fugitifs en Italie‡ ; le commerce, l'amour des richesses, celles des Carthaginois dans les§ îles de la Méditerranée, et sur les côtes de l'Espagne et de l'Afrique ; la nécessité, celles des Athéniens dans l'Asie mineure‖, lorsqu'ils devinrent trop nombreux pour leur territoire borné et peu fertile ; la prudence, celle des Lacédémoniens à Tarente, qui, par elle, se délivrèrent de citoyens turbulents ; une forte politique, les nombreuses colonies des Romains¶, qui se montraient doublement habiles en cédant à leurs colons une portion des terres conquises, et parce qu'ils apaisaient le peuple,

* Cécrops, Cadmus et Danäus.
† Didon.
‡ Enée.
§ Syracuse.
‖ Milet, Ephèse.
¶ Grand nombre de petites colonies dans le pays latin ; aucune ne devint célèbre.

qui demandait sans cesse un nouveau partage, et parce qu'ils faisaient ainsi, des mécontents mêmes, une garde sûre dans le pays qu'ils avaient soumis; l'ardeur du pillage et la fureur guerrière (bien plus que l'excès de population), les colonies ou plutôt les irruptions des peuples du Nord * dans l'empire romain; une piété romanesque et conquérante, celles des Européens † dans l'Asie.

Après la découverte de l'Amérique, on vit la folie, l'injustice, le brigandage de particuliers altérés d'or, se jeter sur les premières terres qu'ils rencontrèrent. Plus ils étaient avides, plus ils s'isolaient; ils voulaient non pas cultiver, mais dévaster: ce n'étaient pas encore là de véritables colonies. Quelque temps après, des dissensions religieuses donnèrent naissance à des établissements plus réguliers: ainsi les Puritains se réfugièrent au nord de l'Amérique; les Catholiques d'Angleterre, dans le Maryland; les Quakers, dans la Pensylvanie: d'où Smith conclut que ce ne fût point la sagesse, mais plutôt les vices des gouvernements d'Europe, qui peuplèrent le nouveau monde.

D'autres grands déplacements sont dus aussi à une politique ombrageuse, ou à une politique faussement religieuse: ainsi l'Espagne rejeta de son sein les Maures; la France, les Protestants; presque tous les gouvernements, les Juifs; et partout on reconnut trop tard l'erreur qui avait dicté ces déplorables conseils. On avait des mécontents; on voulut en faire des ennemis: ils pouvaient servir leur pays; on les força de lui nuire.

Cette longue expérience ne doit pas être perdue pour nous. L'art de mettre les hommes à leur place est

* Invasion des Huns, Goths, Vandales, Cimbres, etc.

† Croisades.

premier, peut-être, dans la science du gouvernement: mais celui de trouver la place des mécontents est, à coup sûr, le plus difficile; et, présenter à leur imagination des lointains, des perspectives où puissent se prendre leurs pensées et leurs desirs, est, je crois, une des solutions de cette difficulté sociale.

Dans le développement des motifs qui ont déterminé l'établissement d'un très-grand nombre de colonies anciennes, on remarque aisément qu'alors même qu'elles étaient indispensables, elles furent volontaires; qu'elles étaient présentées par les gouvernements comme un appât, non comme une peine: on y voit surtout dominer cette idée, que les états politiques devaient tenir en réserve des moyens de placer utilement hors de leur enceinte cette surabondance de citoyens qui, de temps en temps, menaçaient la tranquillité. Ce besoin, au reste, était fondé sur une origine vicieuse: c'était, ou une première loi agraire qui suscitait de menaçantes réclamations qu'il fallait calmer, ou une constitution trop exclusive qui, faite pour une classe, faisait craindre la trop grande population des autres.

C'est en nous emparant de ce qu'ont de plus pur ces vues des anciens, et en nous défendant de l'application qu'en ont faite la plupart des peuples modernes, qu'il convient, je pense, de s'occuper, dès les premiers jours de la paix, de ce genre d'établissements, qui, bien conçus et bien exécutés, peuvent être, après tant d'agitations, la source des plus précieux avantages.

Et combien de Français doivent embrasser avec joie cette idée! combien en est-il chez qui, ne fût-ce que pour des instants, un ciel nouveau est devenu un besoin! et ceux qui, restés seuls, ont perdu, sous le fer des assassins, tout ce qui embellissait pour eux la terre natale; et ceux pour

qui elle est devenue inféconde, et ceux qui n'y trouvent que des regrets, et ceux même qui n'y trouvent que des remords; et les hommes qui ne peuvent se résoudre à placer l'espérance là où ils éprouvèrent le malheur; et cette multitude de malades politiques, ces caractères inflexibles qu'aucun revers ne peut plier, ces imaginations ardentes qu'aucun raisonnement ne ramène, ces esprits fascinés qu'aucun événement ne désenchante; et ceux qui se trouvent toujours trop resserrés dans leur propre pays; et les spéculateurs avides, et les spéculateurs aventureux; et les hommes qui brûlent d'attacher leur nom à des découvertes, à des fondations de villes, à des civilisations; tel pour qui la France constituée est encore trop agitée, tel pour qui elle est trop calme; ceux enfin qui ne peuvent se faire à des égaux, et ceux aussi qui ne peuvent se faire à aucune dépendance.

Et qu'on ne croie pas que tant d'éléments divers et opposés ne peuvent se réunir. N'avons-nous pas vu dans ces dernières années, depuis qu'il y a des opinions politiques en France, des hommes de tous les partis s'embarquer ensemble, pour aller courir les mêmes hasards sur les bords inhabités du Scioto? Ignore-t-on l'empire qu'exercent sur les âmes les plus irritables, le temps, l'espace, une terre nouvelle, des habitudes à commencer, des obstacles communs à vaincre, la nécessité de s'entr'aider remplaçant le désir de se nuire, le travail qui adoucit l'âme, et l'espérance qui la console, et la douceur de s'entretenir du pays qu'on a quitté, celle même de s'en plaindre? etc.

Non, il n'est pas si facile qu'on le pense de haïr toujours: ce sentiment ne demande souvent qu'un prétexte pour s'évanouir; il ne résiste jamais à tant de causes agissant à la fois pour l'éteindre.

Tenons donc pour indubitable que ces discordances d'opinions, aussi bien que celles de caractères, ne forment point obstacle à de nouvelles colonies, et se perdront toutes dans un intérêt commun, si l'on sait mettre à profit les erreurs et les préjugés qui ont flétries jusqu'à ce jour les nombreuses tentatives de ce genre.

Il n'entre point dans le plan de ce mémoire de présenter tous les détails d'un établissement colonial, mon but n'étant que d'éveiller l'attention publique, et d'appeler sur ce sujet des méditations plus approfondies et les connaissances de tous ceux qui ont des localités à présenter.

Toutefois je ne m'interdirai point d'énoncer quelques-uns des principes les plus simples, sur lesquels ces établissements doivent être fondés; j'ai besoin de me rassurer moi-même contre la crainte de voir renouveler des essais désastreux. Je pense qu'on sentira le besoin de s'établir dans des pays chauds, parce que ce sont les seuls qui donnent des avances à ceux qui y apportent de l'industrie; dans des lieux productifs de ce qui nous manque et desireux de ce que nous avons, car c'est là le premier lien des métropoles et des colonies. On s'occupera, sans doute, à faire ces établissements vastes, pour que hommes et projets y soient à l'aise; variés, pour que chacun y trouve la place et le travail qui lui conviennent. On saura, surtout, qu'on ne laisse pas s'embarquer inconsidérément une multitude d'hommes à la fois, avant qu'on ait pourvu aux besoins indispensables à un premier établissement; et l'on se rappellera que c'est par la plus inepte des imprévoyances que les expéditions de Mississipi en 1719, et de Cayenne en 1763, ont dévoré tant de milliers de Français.

Jusqu'à présent les gouvernements se sont fait une espèce

de principe de politique de n'envoyer, pour fonder leurs colonies, que des individus sans industrie, sans capitaux et sans mœurs. C'est le principe absolument contraire qu'il faut adopter; car le vice, l'ignorance et la misère ne peuvent rien fonder: ils ne savent que détruire.

Souvent on a fait servir les colonies de moyens de punition; et l'on a confondu imprudemment celles qui pourraient servir à cette destination, et celles dont les rapports commerciaux doivent faire la richesse de la métropole. Il faut séparer avec soin ces deux genres d'établissements: qu'ils n'aient rien de commun dans leur origine, comme ils n'ont rien de semblable dans leur destination; car l'impression qui résulte d'une origine flétrie a des effets que plusieurs générations suffisent à peine pour effacer.

Mais quels seront les liens entre ces colonies nouvelles et la France? L'histoire offre des résultats frappants pour décider la question. Les colonies grecques étaient indépendantes; elles prospérèrent au plus haut point. Celles de Rome furent toujours gouvernées; leurs progrès furent presque nuls, et leurs noms nous sont à peine connus. La solution est encore aujourd'hui là, malgré la différence des temps et des intérêts. Je sais qu'il est difficile de convaincre des gouvernements qui ne savent pas sortir de l'habitude, qu'ils retireront le prix de leurs avances et de leur protection sans recourir à des lois de contrainte: mais il est certain que l'intérêt bien entendu de deux pays est le vrai lien qui doit les unir; et ce lien est bien fort lorsqu'il y a aussi origine commune: il se conserve même lorsque la force des armes a déplacé les relations. C'est ce qu'on aperçoit visiblement dans la Louisiane, restée française quoique sous la domination espagnole depuis

plus de trente ans; dans le Canada, quoiqu'au pouvoir des Anglais depuis le même nombre d'années: les colons de ces deux pays ont été Français; ils le sont encore, et un tendance manifeste les porte toujours vers nous. C'est donc sur la connaissance anticipée des intérêts réciproques, fortifiés par ce lien si puissant d'origine commune, que l'établissement doit être formé, et sur la force de cet intérêt qu'il faut compter pour en recueillir les avantages. A une grande distance, tout autre rapport devient, avec le temps, illusoire, ou est plus dispendieux que productif: ainsi, point de domination, point de monopole; toujours la force qui protége, jamais celle qui s'empare; justice, bienveillance; voilà les vrais calculs pour les états comme pour les individus; voilà la source d'une prospérité réciproque. L'expérience et le raisonnement s'unissent enfin pour repousser ces doctrines pusillanimes qui supposent une *perte* partout où il s'est fait un *gain*. Les principes vrais du commerce sont l'opposé de ces préjugés: ils promettent à tous les peuples des avantages mutuels, et ils les invitent à s'enrichir tous à la fois par l'échange de leurs productions, par des communications libres et amicales, et par les arts utiles de la paix.

Du reste, les pays propres à recevoir nos colonies sont en assez grand nombre; plusieurs rempliraient parfaitement nos vues.

En nous plaçant dans la supposition où nos îles d'Amérique s'épuiseraient, ou même nous échapperaient, quelques établissements le long de la côte de l'Afrique, ou plutôt dans les îles qui l'avoisinent, seraient faciles et convenables. Un auteur recommandable par les vues qui se manifestent dans ses ouvrages, tous inspirés par l'amour du bien public, le citoyen Montlinot, dans un très-bon mémoire qu'il vient

de publier, indique le long de cette côte un archipel d'îles dont plusieurs, quoique fertiles, sont inhabitées et à notre disposition.

M. le duc de Choiseul, un des hommes de notre siècle qui a eu le plus d'avenir dans l'esprit, qui déjà en 1769 prévoyait la séparation de l'Amérique de l'Angleterre et craignait le partage de la Pologne, cherchait dès cette époque à préparer par des négociations la cession de l'Egypte à la France, pour se trouver prêt à remplacer par les mêmes productions et par un commerce plus étendu, les colonies américaines le jour où elles nous échapperaient. C'est dans le même esprit que le gouvernement anglais encourage avec tant de succès la culture du sucre au Bengale; qu'il avait, avant la guerre, commencé un établissement à Sierra-Leona, et qu'il en préparait un autre à Boulam. Il est d'ailleurs une vérité qu'il ne faut pas chercher à se taire : la question si indiscrètement traitée sur la liberté des noirs, quel que soit le remède que la sagesse apporte aux malheurs qui en ont été la suite, introduira, tôt ou tard, un nouveau système dans la culture des denrées coloniales: il est politique d'aller au-devant de ces grands changements; et la première idée qui s'offre à l'esprit, celle qui amène le plus de suppositions favorables, paraît être d'essayer cette culture aux lieux mêmes où naît le cultivateur.

Je viens à peine de marquer quelques positions; il en est d'autres que je pourrais indiquer également: mais, ici surtout, trop annoncer ce qu'on veut faire est le moyen de ne le faire pas. C'est d'ailleurs aux hommes qui ont le plus et le mieux voyagé, à ceux qui ont porté dans leurs recherches cet amour éclairé et infatigable de leur pays; c'est à notre Bougainville, qui a eu la gloire de

découvrir ce qu'il a été encore glorieux pour les plus illustres navigateurs de l'Angleterre de parcourir après lui; c'est à Fleurieu, qui a si parfaitement observé tout ce qu'il a vu, et si bien éclairé du jour d'une savante critique les observations des autres; c'est à de tels hommes à dire au gouvernement, lorsqu'ils seront interrogés par lui, quels sont les lieux où une terre neuve, un climat facilement salubre, un sol fécond et des rapports marqués par la nature, appellent notre industrie et nous promettent de riches avantages pour le jour du moins où nous saurons n'y porter que des lumières et du travail.

De tout ce qui vient d'être exposé, il suit que tout presse de s'occuper de nouvelles colonies: l'exemple des peuples les plus sages, qui en ont fait un des grands moyens de tranquillité; le besoin de préparer le remplacement de nos colonies actuelles pour ne pas nous trouver en arrière des événements; la convenance de placer la culture de nos denrées coloniales plus près de leurs vrais cultivateurs; la nécessité de former avec les colonies les rapports les plus naturels, bien plus faciles, sans doute, dans des établissements nouveaux que dans les anciens; l'avantage de ne point nous laisser prévenir par une nation rivale, pour qui chacun de nos oublis, chacun de nos retards en ce genre est une conquête; l'opinion des hommes éclairés qui ont porté leur attention et leurs recherches sur cet objet; enfin la douceur de pouvoir attacher à ces entreprises tant d'hommes agités qui ont besoin de projets, tant d'hommes malheureux qui ont besoin d'espérance.

Mémoires sur les relations commerciales des Etats-Unis avec l'Angleterre, par le CITOYEN TALLEYRAND. *Lu le 15 germinal, an* V.

IL n'est pas de science plus avide de faits que l'économie politique. L'art de les recueillir, de les ordonner, de les juger la constitue presque tout entière; et, sous ce point de vue, elle a peut-être plus à attendre de l'observation que du génie; car, arrive le moment où il faut tout éprouver, sous peine de ne rien savoir; et c'est alors que les faits deviennent les vérificateurs de la science, après en avoir été les matériaux.

Toutefois il faut se garder de cette manie qui voudrait toujours recommencer les expériences; et ne jamais rien croire, pour avoir le droit de tout ignorer; mais on ne doit pas moins repousser cette témérité qui, dédaignant tout ce qui est positif, trouve plus commode de deviner que de voir.

Que faut-il donc? Unir sans cesse les produits de l'observation à ceux de la pensée; admettre, sans doute, les résultats que donnent certains faits généraux bien constants, bien d'accord, et vus tout entiers; mais en même temps, savoir appeler, dans les nouvelles questions et même dans les profondeurs de quelques-unes des anciennes, le secours de faits nouveaux ou nouvellement observés. Il faut se défendre des premiers aperçus, ces axiomes de la paresse et de l'ignorance; et enfin se défier beaucoup de ces principes ambitieux qui veulent tout embrasser; ou plutôt, corrigeant l'acception d'un mot dont on a tant abusé,

n'appeler du nom de principe que l'idée première dans l'ordre du raisonnement, et non l'idée générale; que ce qui précède, non ce qui domine.

Plein de ces vérites auxquelles tout nous ramène, j'ai cru pouvoir présenter à la classe de l'Institut à laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'appartenir quelques observations que j'ai été à portée de faire en Amérique, et dont les conséquences m'ont plus d'une fois étonné.

Je me suis persuadé que quelques-unes de ces observations, vérifiées sur toute l'étendue d'un pays longtemps encore nouveau, pourraient être apportées au dépôt de l'économie politique, et y être reçues avec l'intérêt qu'on accorde en histoire naturelle à la plus simple des productions ramassée par un voyageur sur sa route.

Malheureusement, l'esprit de système est dans les sciences ce que l'esprit de parti est dans les sociétés: il trouve les moyens d'abuser même des faits; car il les dénature, ou il en détourne les conséquences; raison de plus, non pour les dédaigner, mais pour apprendre à bien connaître et ce qu'ils sont et ce qu'ils prouvent.

On dit proverbialement qu'il ne faut pas disputer sur les faits. Si ce proverbe parvient un jour à être vrai, il restera bien peu de disputes parmi les hommes.

Un fait remarquable dans l'histoire des relations commerciales, et que j'ai été à portée de bien voir, m'a fait connaître particulièrement jusqu'à quel point il importe d'être observateur attentif de ce qui est, alors qu'on s'occupe de ce qui sera et de ce qui doit être. Ce fait est l'activité toujours croissante des relations de commerce entre les Etats-Unis et l'Angleterre; activité qui, par ses causes et ses résultats, n'appartient pas moins à l'économie politique qu'à l'histoire philosophique des nations.

Lorsque, après cette lutte sanglante, lutte où les Français défendirent si bien la cause de leurs nouveaux alliés, les Etats-Unis de l'Amérique se furent affranchis de la domination anglaise, toutes les raisons semblaient se réunir pour persuader que les liens de commerce qui unissaient naguère ces deux portions d'un même peuple allaient se rompre, et que d'autres liens devaient se former: le souvenir des oppressions qui avaient pesé sur les Américains; l'image plus récente des maux produits par une guerre de sept ans; l'humiliation de dépendre de nouveau, par leurs besoins, d'un pays qui avait voulu les asservir; tous les titres militaires subsistant dans chaque famille américaine pour y perpétuer la défiance et la haine envers la Grande-Bretagne.

Que si l'on ajoute ce sentiment si naturel qui devait porter les Américains à s'attacher par la confiance aux Français, leurs frères d'armes et leurs libérateurs; si l'on observe que ce sentiment s'était manifesté avec force lorsque la guerre se déclara entre l'Angleterre et la France; qu'à cette époque les discours du peuple américain, la grande majorité des papiers publics, les actes mêmes du gouvernement, semblaient découvrir une forte inclination pour la nation française, et une aversion non moins forte pour le nom anglais; toutes ces raisons si puissantes de leur réunion doivent entraîner vers ce résultat, que le commerce américain était pour jamais détourné de son cours, ou que, s'il inclinait du côté de l'Angleterre, il faudrait bien peu d'efforts pour l'attirer entièrement vers nous; dès lors de nouvelles inductions sur la nature des rapports entre la métropole et les colonies, sur l'empire des goûts et des habitudes, sur les causes les plus déterminantes de la prospérité du commerce, sur la

direction qu'il peut recevoir des causes morales combinées avec l'intérêt, et, en dernière analyse, beaucoup d'erreurs économiques.

L'observation, et une observation bien suivie, peut seule prévenir ces erreurs.

Quiconque a bien vu l'Amérique ne peut plus douter maintenant que dans la plupart de ses habitudes elle ne soit restée anglaise; que son ancien commerce avec l'Angleterre n'ait même gagné de l'activité, au lieu d'en perdre, depuis l'époque de l'indépendance des Etats-Unis, et que, par conséquent, l'indépendance, loin d'être funeste à l'Angleterre, ne lui ait été à plusieurs égards avantageuse.

Un fait inattaquable le démontre. L'Amérique consomme annuellement plus de trois millions sterling de marchandises anglaises; il y a quinze ans elle n'en consommait pas la moitié; ainsi, pour l'Angleterre, accroissement d'exportation d'objets manufacturés et, de plus, exemption des frais de gouvernement. Un tel fait, inscrit dans les registres de la douane, ne peut être contesté; mais, on l'a déjà dit, il n'est point de fait dont on n'abuse. Si l'on regardait celui-ci comme une suite nécessaire de toute rupture des colonies, même des colonies à sucre, avec la métropole, on se tromperait étrangement. Si, d'autre part, on voulait croire qu'il tient uniquement à des causes passagères, et qu'il est facile d'obtenir un résultat opposé, on ne se tromperait pas moins. Pour échapper à l'une et l'autre erreur, il ne s'agit que de bien connaître et de bien développer les causes du fait.

Il faut se hâter de le dire, la conduite irréfléchie de l'ancien gouvernement de France a, plus qu'on ne pense, préparé ce résultat favorable à l'Angleterre. Si, après la paix qui assura l'indépendance de l'Amérique, la France,

eût senti tout le prix de sa position, elle eût cherché à multiplier les relations qui pendant la guerre s'étaient heureusement établies entre elle et ses alliés, et qui s'étaient interrompues avec la Grande-Bretagne : alors, les anciennes habitudes étant presque oubliées, on eût pu du moins lutter avec quelque avantage contre tout ce qui pouvait les rappeler. Mais que fit la France à cette époque ? Elle craignit que ces mêmes principes d'indépendance qu'elle avait protégés de ses armes chez les américains, ne s'introduisissent chez elle, et à la paix elle discontinua et découragea toutes relations avec eux. Que fit l'Angleterre ? elle oublia ses ressentiments, et rouvrit promptement ses anciennes communications, qu'elle rendit plus actives encore. Dès lors, il fut décidé que l'Amérique servirait les intérêts de l'Angleterre. Que faut-il en effet pour cela ? qu'elle le veuille et qu'elle le puisse. Or, volonté et pouvoir se trouvent réunis ici.

Ce qui détermine la volonté, c'est l'inclination, c'est l'intérêt. Il paraît d'abord étrange et presque paradoxal de prétendre que les Américains sont portés d'inclination vers l'Angleterre ; mais il ne faut pas perdre de vue que le peuple américain est un peuple dépassionné, que la victoire et le temps ont amorti ses haines, et que chez lui les inclinations se réduisent à de simples habitudes : or, toutes ses habitudes le rapprochent de l'Angleterre.

L'identité de langage est un premier rapport dont on ne saurait trop méditer l'influence. Cette identité place entre les hommes de ces deux pays un caractère commun qui les fera toujours se prendre l'un à l'autre et se reconnaître ; ils se croiront mutuellement chez eux quand ils voyageront l'un chez l'autre ; ils échangeront avec un plaisir réciproque la plénitude de leurs pensées et toute la discussion de

leurs intérêts, tandis qu'une barrière insurmontable est élevée entre les peuples de différent langage, qui ne peuvent prononcer un mot sans s'avertir qu'ils n'appartiennent pas à la même patrie; entre qui toute transmission de pensée est un travail pénible, et non une jouissance; qui ne parviennent jamais à s'entendre parfaitement, et pour qui le résultat de conversation, après s'être fatigués de leurs efforts impuissants, est de se trouver mutuellement ridicules. Dans toutes les parties de l'Amérique que j'ai parcourues, je n'ai pas trouvé un seul Anglais qui ne se trouva Américain, pas un seul Français qui ne se trouva étranger.

Qu'on ne s'étonne pas, au reste, de trouver ce rapprochement vers l'Angleterre dans un pays où les traits distinctifs de la constitution, soit dans l'union fédérale, soit dans les Etats séparés, sont empreints d'une si forte ressemblance avec les grands linéaments de la constitution anglaise. Sur quoi repose aujourd'hui la liberté individuelle en Amérique? Sur les mêmes fondements que la liberté anglaise. Sur *l'habeas corpus* et sur le jugement par jurés. Assistez aux séances du Congrès, à celle des législatures particulières; suivez les discussions qui préparent les lois nationales: où prend-on ses citations, ses analogies, ses exemples? Dans les lois anglaises, dans les coutumes de la Grande-Bretagne, dans les règlements du Parlement. Entrez dans les cours de justice: quelles autorités invoque-t-on? Les statuts, les jugements, les décisions des cours anglaises. Certes, si de tels hommes n'ont pas une tendance vers la Grande-Bretagne, il faut renoncer à connaître l'influence des lois sur les hommes et nier les modifications qu'ils reçoivent de tout ce qui les entoure. Inutilement, les noms de république et de monarchie

semblent placer entre les deux gouvernements des distinctions qu'il n'est pas permis de confondre: il est clair pour tout homme qui va au fond des idées, que dans la constitution représentative de l'Angleterre il y a de la république, comme il y a de la monarchie dans le pouvoir exécutif des Américains. Cela a été vrai surtout aussi longtemps qu'a duré la présidence du général Washington; car la force d'opinion attachée à sa personne dans toute l'Amérique représente facilement l'espèce de pouvoir magique que les publicistes attribuent aux monarchies.

La partie de la nation américaine chez qui l'on devrait rencontrer le moins de préjugés, les hommes qui réunissent l'aisance et l'instruction, ceux qui ont été les moteurs de la révolution, et qui, en soufflant dans l'âme du peuple la haine contre les Anglais, auraient dû, il semble, s'en pénétrer pour toujours; ceux-là mêmes sont insensiblement ramenés vers l'Angleterre par différents motifs. Plusieurs ont étés élevés en Europe; et, à cette époque, l'Europe des Américains n'était que l'Angleterre. Ils n'ont guère d'idées comparatives de grandeur, de puissance, d'élévation, que celles qui leur sont fournies par les objets tirés de l'Angleterre; et, surpris eux-mêmes de la hardiesse du pas qu'ils ont fait en se séparant, ils sont ramenés à une sorte de respect pour elle par tous leurs mouvements involontaires. Ils ne peuvent pas se dissimuler que, sans la France, ils n'auraient pas réussi à secouer le joug de l'Angleterre; mais, malheureusement, ils pensent que les services des nations ne sont que des calculs, et non de l'attachement; ils disent même que l'ancien gouvernement de France, alors qu'il fit des sacrifices en leur faveur, agit bien plus pour leur indépendance que pour leur liberté; qu'après les avoir aidés à

se séparer de l'Angleterre, il travailla sourdement à les tenir désunis entre eux, pour qu'ils se trouvassent émancipés sans avoir ni sagesse pour se conduire, ni force pour se protéger.

Ainsi les inclinations, ou, si l'on veut, les habitudes, ramènent sans cesse les Américains vers l'Angleterre; l'intérêt, bien plus encore; car la grande affaire, dans un pays nouveau, est incontestablement d'accroître sa fortune. La preuve d'une telle disposition générale s'y manifeste de toutes parts: on la trouve avec évidence dans la manière dont on y traite tout le reste. Les pratiques religieuses elles-mêmes s'en ressentent extrêmement. A cet égard, voici ce que j'ai vu; la liaison avec mon sujet ne tardera pas à se faire sentir.

On sait que la religion a conservé en Angleterre un puissant empire sur les esprits; que la philosophie même la plus indépendante n'a osé s'y déprendre entièrement des idées religieuses; que depuis Luther toutes les sectes y ont pénétré, que toutes s'y sont maintenues, que plusieurs y ont pris naissance. On sait la part qu'elles ont eue dans les grandes mutations politiques; enfin, que toutes se sont transplantées en Amérique, et que quelques-uns des Etats leur doivent leur origine.

On pourrait croire d'abord, qu'après leur transmigration ces sectes sont ce qu'elles étaient auparavant, et en conclure qu'elles pourraient aussi agiter l'Amérique. Quelle n'est pas la surprise du voyageur lorsqu'il les voit co-exister toutes dans ce calme parfait qui semble à jamais inaltérable; lorsqu'en une même maison le père, la mère, les enfants, suivent chacun paisiblement et sans opposition celui des cultes que chacun préfère. J'ai été plus d'une fois témoin de ce spectacle, auquel rien de ce que j'avais

vu en Europe n'avait pu me préparer. Dans les jours consacrés à la religion, tous les individus d'une même famille sortaient ensemble, allaient chacun auprès du ministre de son culte, et rentraient ensuite pour s'occuper des mêmes intérêts domestiques. Cette diversité d'opinions n'en apportait aucune dans leurs sentiments et dans leurs autres habitudes: point de disputes, pas même de questions, à cet égard. La religion y semblait être un secret individuel que personne ne se croyait le droit d'interroger ni de pénétrer. Aussi, lorsque de quelque contrée de l'Europe il arrive en Amérique un sectaire ambitieux, jaloux de faire triompher sa doctrine en échauffant les esprits, loin de trouver, comme, partout ailleurs, des hommes disposés à s'engager sous sa bannière, à peine même est-il aperçu de ses voisins, son enthousiasme n'attire ni n'émeut, il n'inspire ni haine ni curiosité; chacun enfin reste avec sa religion et continue ses affaires.*

Un telle impassibilité, que ne peut ébranler le fougueux prosélytisme, et qu'il ne s'agit point ici de juger, mais d'expliquer, a indubitablement pour cause immédiate la liberté et surtout l'égalité des cultes. En Amérique, aucun n'est proscrit, aucun n'est ordonné, dès lors point d'agitations religieuses. Mais cette égalité parfaite a elle-même un principe: c'est que la religion, quoiqu'elle y soit partout un sentiment vrai, y est surtout un sentiment

* Dans un temps de factions politiques cela cesserait d'être exact; car alors chaque secte voudrait nécessairement être l'auxiliaire de tel ou tel parti, comme on l'a déjà vu; mais ces factions une fois calmées la religion deviendrait à l'instant dans les Etats-Unis ce qu'elle y est aujourd'hui; ce qui veut dire en résultat, qu'elle n'y a point de fanatisme pour son propre compte, et c'est déjà beaucoup.—(*Note du citoyen Talleyrand, au mois de ventôse, an VII.*)

d'habitude : toutes les ardeurs du moment s'y portent vers les moyens d'accroître promptement son bien-être ; et voilà en résultat la grande cause du calme parfait des Américains pour tout ce qui n'est pas, dans cet ordre d'idées, ou moyen ou obstacle.

Remarquons, de plus, que les Américains des villes, naguère colons et dès lors accoutumés à se regarder là comme étrangers, ont dû naturellement tourner leur activité vers les spéculations commerciales, et subordonner à ces spéculations les travaux mêmes de l'agriculture, par laquelle cependant elles doivent s'alimenter. Or, une telle préférence, qui suppose d'abord un désir impatient de faire fortune, ne tarde pas à accroître ce désir : car le commerce, qui étend les rapports de l'homme à l'homme, multiplie nécessairement ses besoins ; et l'agriculture, qui le circonscrit dans la famille, nécessairement aussi les reduit.

L'Amérique, dont la population est actuellement de plus de quatre millions d'habitants et augmente très-rapidement, est dans l'enfance des manufactures ; quelques forges, quelques verreries, des tanneries, et un assez grand nombre de petites et imparfaites fabriques de casimir, de tricot grossier et de coton dans quelques endroits, servent mieux à attester l'impuissance des efforts faits jusqu'à ce jour, qu'a fournir au pays les articles manufacturés de sa consommation journalière. Il en résulte qu'elle a besoin de recevoir de l'Europe, non-seulement une grande partie de ce qu'elle consomme intérieurement, mais aussi une grande partie de ce qu'elle emploie pour son commerce extérieur. Or, tous ces objets sont fournis à l'Amérique si complétement par l'Angleterre, qu'on a lieu de douter si, dans les temps de la plus sévère prohibition, l'Angleterre jouissait plus exclusivement de ce privilége avec ce qui était alors

ses colonies, qu'elle n'en jouit actuellement avec les Etats-Unis indépendants.

Les causes de ce monopole volontaire sont, au reste, faciles à assigner: l'immensité de fabrication qui sort des manufactures anglaises, la division du travail, à la fois principe et conséquence de cette grande fabrication, et particulièrement l'ingénieux emploi des forces mécaniques adaptées aux différents procédés des manufactures, ont donné moyen aux manufacturiers anglais de baisser le prix de tous les articles d'un usage journalier au-dessous de celui auquel les autres nations ont pu le livrer jusqu'à ce jour. De plus, les grands capitaux des négociants anglais leur permettent d'accorder des crédits plus longs qu'aucun négociant d'aucune autre nation ne le pourrait faire: ces crédits sont au moins d'un an, et souvent de plus. Il en résulte que le négociant américain qui tire ses marchandises d'Angleterre, n'emploie presque aucun capital à lui dans le commerce, et le fait presque tout entier sur les capitaux anglais. C'est donc réellement l'Angleterre qui fait le commerce de consommation de l'Amérique.

Sans doute que le négociant Anglais doit, de manière ou d'autre, charger ses comptes de vente de l'intérêt de ses fonds dont il accorde un si long usage; mais, comme les demandes se succèdent et s'augmentent, chaque année, il s'établit une balance de paiements réguliers et de crédits nouveaux qui ne laissent en souffrance qu'un premier déboursé, dont l'intérêt est à répartir sur les factures suivantes en même temps que sur les premières. Cette première dette établit, comme on voit, un lien difficile à rompre des deux côtés entre le corréspondant anglais et l'Américain. Le premier craint, s'il arrêtait ses envois, de renverser un débiteur dont la prospérité est la seule garantie de ses

avances: l'Américain craint de son côté de quitter un fournisseur avec lequel il y a trop d'anciens comptes à régler. Entre ces intérêts réciproques et cimentés par de longues habitudes, il est à peu près impossible à une nation tierce d'intervenir. Aussi la France est-elle réduite avec l'Amérique à quelques fournitures de denrées particulières à son sol; mais elle n'entre point en concurrence avec l'Angleterre sur la vente des objets manufacturés, qu'elle ne pourrait établir en Amérique ni à si bon compte, ni à si long terme de crédit.

Si l'on voulait objecter qu'il s'est fait pendant notre révolution de nombreuses exportations de marchandises françaises en Amérique, la réponse serait bien facile. De telles exportations n'ont rien de commun avec un commerce régulier; c'est la spéculation précipitée de ceux qui, épouvantés des réquisitions, du maximum et de tous les désastres révolutionnaires, ont préféré une perte quelconque sur leurs marchandises vendues en Amérique, au risque ou plutôt à la certitude d'une perte plus grande s'ils les laissaient en France; c'est l'empressement tumultueux de gens qui déménagent dans un incendie et pour qui tout abri est bon, et non l'importation judicieuse de négociants qui ont fait un calcul et qui le réalisent. Du reste, ses objets se sont mal vendus, et les Américains ont préféré de beaucoup les marchandises anglaises: ce qui fournit un argument de plus pour l'Angleterre dans la balance des intérêts américains.

Ainsi le marchand américain est lié à l'Angleterre, non seulement par la nature de ses transactions, par le besoin du crédit qu'il y obtient, par le poids du crédit qu'il y a obtenu, mais encore par la loi qui lui impose irrésistiblement le goût du consommateur; ces liens sont si réels, et

il en résulte des rapports commerciaux si constants entre les deux pays, que l'Amérique n'a d'échange véritable qu'avec l'Angleterre; en sorte que presque toutes les lettres de change que les Américains tirent sur ce continent sont payables à Londres.

Gardons-nous cependant, en considérant ainsi les Américains sous un seul point de vue, de les juger individuellement avec trop de sévérité; comme particuliers, on peut trouver en eux le germe de toutes les qualités sociales; mais comme peuple nouvellement constitué et formé d'éléments divers, leur caractère national n'est pas encore décidé. Ils restent Anglais, sans doute par d'anciennes habitudes, mais peut-être aussi parce qu'ils n'ont pas eu le temps d'être entièrement Américains. On a observé que leur climat n'était pas fait; leur caractère ne l'est pas davantage.

Que l'on considère ces cités populeuses d'Anglais, d'Allemands, de Hollandais, d'Irlandais, et aussi d'habitants indigènes; ces bourgades lointaines, si distantes les unes des autres; ces vastes contrées incultes, traversées plutôt qu'habitées par des hommes qui ne sont d'aucun pays; quel lien commun concevoir au milieu de toutes ces disparités. C'est un spectacle neuf pour le voyageur qui, partant d'une ville principale où l'état social est perfectionné, traverse successivement tous les degrés de civilisation et d'industrie qui vont toujours en s'affaiblissant, jusqu'à ce qu'il arrive en très-peu de jours à la cabane informe et grossière construite de troncs d'arbres nouvellement abattus. Un tel voyage est une sorte d'analyse pratique et vivante de l'origine des peuples et des Etats: on part de l'ensemble le plus composé pour arriver aux éléments les plus simples; à chaque journée on perd de vue quelques-unes de ces inventions que nos

besoins, en se multipliant, ont rendues nécessaires; et il semble que l'on voyage en arrière dans l'histoire des progrès de l'esprit humain. Si un tel spectacle attache fortement l'imagination, si l'on se plaît à retrouver dans la succession de l'espace ce qui semble n'appartenir qu'à la succession des temps, il faut se résoudre à ne voir que très-peu de liens sociaux, nul caractère commun, parmi des hommes qui semblent si peu appartenir à la même association.

Dans plusieurs cantons, la mer et les bois en ont fait des pêcheurs ou des bûcherons; or, de tels hommes n'ont point, à proprement parler, de patrie, et leur morale sociale se réduit à bien peu de chose. On a dit depuis longtemps que l'homme est disciple de ce qui l'entoure, et cela est vrai: celui qui n'a autour de lui que des déserts, ne peut donc recevoir des leçons que de ce qu'il fait pour vivre. L'idée du besoin que les hommes ont les uns des autres n'existe pas en lui; et c'est uniquement en décomposant le métier qu'il exerce, qu'on trouve le principe de ses affections et de toute sa moralité.

Le bûcheron américain ne s'intéresse à rien; toute idée sensible est loin de lui: ces branches si élégamment jetées par la nature, un beau feuillage, une couleur vive qui anime une partie de bois, un vert plus fort qui en assombrit un autre, tout cela n'est rien; il n'a de souvenir à placer nulle part: c'est la quantité de coups de hache qu'il faut qu'il donne pour abattre un arbre, qui est son unique idée. Il n'a point planté; il n'en sait point les plaisirs. L'arbre qu'il planterait n'est bon à rien pour lui, car jamais il ne le verra assez fort pour qu'il puisse l'abattre: c'est détruire qui le fait vivre; on détruit partout: aussi tout lieu lui est bon; il ne tient pas au

champ où il a placé son travail, parce que son travail n'est que de la fatigue, et qu'aucune idée douce n'y est jointe. Ce qui sort de ses mains ne passe point par toutes les croissances si attachantes pour le cultivateur ; il ne suit pas la destinée de ses productions ; il ne connaît pas le plaisir des nouveaux essais ; et si en s'en allant il n'oublie pas sa hache, il ne laisse pas de regrets là ou il a vécu des années.

Le pêcheur américain reçoit de sa profession une âme à peu près aussi insouciante. Ses affections, son intérêt, sa vie, sont à côté de la société à laquelle on croit qu'il appartient. Ce serait un préjugé de penser qu'il est un membre fort utile ; car il ne faut pas comparer ces pêcheurs-là à ceux d'Europe, et croire que c'est comme en Europe le moyen de former des maletots, de faire des hommes de mer adroits et robustes : en Amérique, j'en excepte les habitants de Nantuket qui pêchent la baleine, la pêche est un métier de paresseux. Deux lieues de la côte, quand ils n'ont pas de mauvais temps à craindre, un mille quand le temps est incertain, voilà le courage qu'ils montrent ; et la ligne est le seul harpon qu'ils sachent manier : ainsi leur science n'est qu'une bien petite ruse ; et leur action, qui consiste à avoir un bras pendant au bord d'un bateau, ressemble bien à de la fainéantise. Ils n'aiment aucun lieu ; ils ne connaissent la terre que par une mauvaise maison qu'ils habitent ; c'est la mer qui leur donne leur nourriture ; aussi quelques morues de plus ou de moins déterminent leur patrie. Si le nombre leur paraît diminuer à tel endroit, ils s'en vont, et cherchent une autre patrie où il y ait quelques morues de plus. Lorsque quelques écrivains politiques ont dit que la pêche était une sorte d'agriculture, ils ont dit une chose qui a

l'air brillant, mais qui n'a pas de vérité. Toutes les qualités, toutes les vertus qui sont attachées à l'agriculture, manquent à l'homme qui se livre à la pêche. L'agriculture produit un patriote dans la bonne acception de ce mot; la pêche ne sait faire que des cosmopolites.

Je viens de m'arrêter trop longtemps peut-être à tracer la peinture de ces mœurs; elle peut sembler étrangère à ce mémoire, et pourtant elle en complète l'objet, car j'avais à prouver que ce n'est pas seulement par les raisons d'origine, de langage et d'intérêt que les Américains se retrouvent si souvent Anglais. (Observation qui s'applique plus particulièrement aux habitants des villes.) En portant mes regards sur ces peuplades errantes dans les bois, sur le bord des mers et le long des rivières, mon observation générale se fortifiait à leur égard de cette indolence, de ce défaut de caractère à soi, qui rend cette classe d'Américains plus facile à recevoir et à conserver l'impression d'un caractère étranger. La dernière de ces causes doit sans doute s'affaiblir et même disparaître, lorsque la population toujours croissante aura pu, en fécondant tant de terres desertes, en rapprocher les habitants; quant aux autres causes, elles ont des racines si profondes, qu'il faudrait peut-être un établissement français en Amérique pour lutter contre leur ascendant avec quelque espoir de succès. Une telle vue politique n'est pas sans doute à négliger, mais elle n'appartient pas à l'objet de ce mémoire.

J'ai établi que les Américains sont Anglais et par leurs habitudes et par leurs besoins; je suis loin de vouloir en conclure que par leurs inclinations ils soient restés sujets de la Grande-Bretagne. Tout, il est vrai, les ramène vers l'Angleterre industrieuse, mais tout doit les éloigner de l'Angleterre mère-patrie. Ils peuvent vouloir dépendre

de son commerce, dont ils se trouvent bien, sans consentir à dépendre de son autorité, dont ils se sont très-mal trouvés.* Ils n'ont pas oublié ce que leur a coûté leur liberté, et ne seront pas assez irréfléchis pour consentir à la perdre et à se laisser entraîner par des ambitions individuelles. Ils n'ont plus, il est vrai, l'enthousiasme qui détruit; mais ils ont le bon sens qui conserve. Ils ne haïssent pas le gouvernement anglais; mais ce sera sans doute à condition qu'il ne voudra pas être le leur. Surtout ils n'ont garde de se haïr entre eux; ensemble ils ont combattu, ensemble ils profitent de la victoire. Partis, factions, haines, tout a disparu:* en bons calculateurs ils ont trouvé que cela ne produisait rien de bon. Aussi personne ne reproche à son voisin ce qu'il est; chacun cherche à le tourner à son avantage: ce sont des voyageurs arrivés à bon port, et qui croient au moins inutile de se demander sans cesse pourquoi l'on s'est embarqué et pourquoi l'on a suivi telle route.

Concluons. Pour parvenir à la preuve complète du fait que j'avais avancé sur les relations des Américains avec la Grande-Bretagne, il a fallu repousser les vraisemblances, écarter les analogies; donc, dans les sciences positives sur-

* Cela était littéralement vrai lorsque ce mémoire a été lu à l'Institut. Si depuis ce moment des partis s'y sont formés de nouveau, s'il en est un qui travaille à remettre honteusement l'Amérique sous le joug de la Grande-Bretagne, cela confirmerait beaucoup trop ce que j'établis dans le cours de ce mémoire, que les Américains sont encore Anglais; mais tout porte à croire qu'un tel parti ne triomphera pas, que la sagesse du gouvernement français aura déconcerté ses espérances; et je n'aurai pas à rétracter le bien que je dis ici d'un peuple de qui je me plais à reconnaître qu'il n'est Anglais que par des habitudes qui ne touchent point à son indépendance politique, et non par le sentiment qui lui ferait regretter de l'avoir conquise.—(*Note du citoyen Talleyrand, au mois de ventôse, an VII.*)

tout, il importe, sous peine de graves erreurs, de se défendre de ce qui n'est que probable.

Ce fait lui-même bien connu pouvait conduire à de faux résultats; il portait à croire que l'indépendance des colonies était un bien pour les métropoles: mais en remontant à ses véritables causes, la conséquence s'est resserrée. Maintenant on n'est plus en droit d'y voir autre chose, si ce n'est que l'indépendance des Etats-Unis a été utile à l'Angleterre, et qu'elle le serait à tous les Etats du Continent qui, d'une part, offriraient les mêmes avantages à des colonies du même genre, et, de l'autre, seraient secondés par les mêmes fautes de leurs voisins.

Le développement des causes de ce fait a amené beaucoup de conséquences ultérieures.

En parcourant ces causes on a dû conclure successivement:

1°. Que les premières années qui suivent la paix décident du système commercial des Etats; et que s'ils ne savent pas saisir le moment pour la tourner à leur profit, elle se tourne presque inévitablement à leur plus grande perte.

2°. Que les habitudes commerciales sont plus difficiles à rompre qu'on ne pense, et que l'intérêt rapproche en un jour et souvent pour jamais ceux que les passions les plus ardentes avaient armés pendant plusieurs années consécutives:

3°. Que dans le calcul des rapports quelconques qui peuvent exister entre les hommes, l'identité de langage est une donnée des plus concluantes:

4°. Que la liberté et surtout l'égalité des cultes est une des plus fortes garanties de la tranquillité sociale; car là

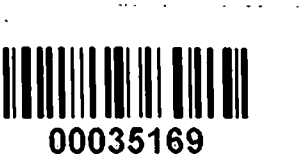
où les consciences sont respectées; les autres droits ne peuvent manquer de l'être :

5°. Que l'esprit de commerce, qui rend l'homme tolérant par indifférence, tend aussi à le rendre personnel par avidité, et qu'un peuple surtout dont la morale a été ébranlée par de longues agitations, doit, par des institutions sages, être attiré vers l'agriculture ; car le commerce tient toujours en effervescence les passions, et toujours l'agriculture les calme.

Enfin, qu'après une révolution qui a tout changé, il faut savoir renoncer à ses haines si l'on ne veut renoncer pour jamais à son bonheur.

END OF VOL. I.

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